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A PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPRAISAL OF SEXUALITY AND ANTI-FEMINISM IN GUNTER GRASS' NOVEL *DER BUTT*

by

(C)

Kathryn E. Shapland

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS IN GERMAN LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1986

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled A PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPRAISAL OF SEXUALITY AND ANTI-FEMINISM IN GÜNTER GRASS' NOVEL *DER BUTT* submitted by Kathryn E. Shapland in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS IN GERMAN LITERATURE.

Holger Pausch
.....
Supervisor

.....

.....

Date Sept. 26, '86

DEDICATION

For my parents.

ABSTRACT

The concern of this thesis is to divine the anti-feminist tendencies which are presumed to exist in Günter Grass' novel *Der Butt*. In so doing, Freud's theories of psycho-sexual analysis shall be used in an attempt to unearth these tendencies which, it seems, cannot be pinpointed in a mere superficial appraisal of the text. The presumption is that should *Der Butt* lend itself to an interpretation in the light of Freud's theories, then there must, necessarily, exist a common link between Freudian theory and Grass' literary text. It could then, perhaps, be argued that *Der Butt* contains similar anti-feminist tendencies as those known to be present in Freud's psychoanalytical theories; theories which are well known for their phallocentric bias.

In chapter two of this thesis the transition, in *Der Butt*, from a matriarchal system to a patriarchy shall be discussed from the perspective of Freud's theories concerning the foundation and perpetuation of cultured civilisation, in the form of a patriarchy. Subsequently the link between this process of civilisation and the libidinal development of the individual shall be disclosed, with the emphasis falling on the anti-feminist notion that the perpetuation of social mores rests almost entirely on the male individual, due to their ability to sublimate instinctual impulses (such as the desire to commit incest) for the good of the social body. Women, according to Freudian theory, act as an inhibiting factor in this respect, because they are driven more by instinct than reason.

Chapter three concerns Freud's theory of "penis-envy." This essentially states that women who aspire to dreams of equality or even domination over men are held to be "suffering" acute envy of the phallus; the symbol of masculine power. The psychological consequences of this are usually to be explained, by Freud, in terms of the sexual aberrations of women. Various female figures in *Der Butt* shall be analysed with respect to the anti-feminist tendencies inherent in the Freudian theory of "Penisneid."

Chapter four shall equate the loss of third breast, as expressed in *Der Butt*, with the consequences that the loss of the breast entails for the infant, as explained by Freud. The main emphasis, however, shall concern an appraisal of the symbol of the third breast as a

reaffirmation of the traditional male "Wunschtraum."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to Professor Rhys Williams of the University College of Swansea for stimulating my interest in the works of Günter Grass, and to Dr. Holger Pausch of the University of Alberta for his advice and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis.

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1. Introduction and Problem Analysis

Günter Grass' novel *Der Butt* was first published in August 1977, and by September of the same year the sales of his novel had exceeded 150,000 copies, being the first major post-war novel "seriöser Literatur,"[1] as Manfred Durzak comments, to reach such "best-seller" status. The critical acclaim Grass received on the publication of *Der Butt* was, for the most part, extremely positive in character. Again, Durzak described the novel as "ein märchenhafter Roman,"[2] whilst Heinrich Vormweg hailed it as a phenomenal piece of work, perceiving it as "ein Vergnügen auf dem Niveau der vielgelesenen grossen Roman der Weltliteratur, vorgestellt aus dieser unserer Gegenwart."[3]

Christoph Perels[4] goes so far as to view *Der Butt* as Grass' return to artistic writing, following the politically-orientated style of *Örtlich betäubt* (1969), and, as such, the culmination of his work towards artistic maturity, after his first major success *Die Blechtrommel* (1959). Moreover, in an open letter to Grass, Wolfgang Hildesheimer praised *Der Butt* as "das grandiose Reifezeugnis" of his literary achievements, "ein Jahrhundertbuch."[5]

Whereas critics such as Fritz J. Raddatz were to praise the sheer historical scope of the novel, which spans four thousand years of man's existence, from the Stone Age right up to present day, as being "die kunstvollste Verzwirnung individuellen Geschehens mit Historie, die ein Roman seit Joyce' *Ulysses* geleistet hat,"[6] there were others such as Marcel Reich-Ranicki who, whilst praising Grass' artistic talent and his breadth of imagination, felt that the novel fell short of its expectations. In this respect he comments that: "Der Roman will zuviel und leistet zuwenig. Anders ausgedrückt: Je mehr er uns bietet, desto mehr bleibt er uns

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[1] Manfred Durzak, "Ein märchenhafter Roman. Zum *Butt* von Günter Grass," in *Der Deutsche Roman der Gegenwart. Entwicklungsvoraussetzungen und Tendenzen*, 3rd revised edition. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978), p.301.

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Heinrich Vormweg, "Eine phantastische Totale. Nachtrag zur *Butt* Kritik," in *Günter Grass. Text + Kritik*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. No. 1/1a, 5th edition (June 1978), p.94.

[4] Christoph Perels, "Über den *Butt*," *ibid.* pp.89-93.

[5] Wolfgang Hildesheimer, "*Butt* und die Welt. Geburtstagsbrief an Günter Grass," in *Merkur*, 31(1979), p.966.

[6] Fritz J. Raddatz, "'Wirklicher bin ich in meinen Geschichten' *Der Butt* von Günter Grass. Eine erste Annäherung," *ibid.* pp.892-901, p.895.

schuldig."[7] His comments reflect the fact that Grass has attempted in his novel not only to interweave various temporal spheres, such that past and present are simultaneously experienced and related with the past being no less "real" than the present, but also to intermingle the author and narrator ego, thus creating the confusion between various levels of fiction.

One of these levels of fiction which, in effect, represents the central issue of this thesis, concerns the inclusion of the fairytale "Von dem Fischer un syner Fru."[8] Grass uses this fairytale as the basis for reflection upon the historical relationship between men and women, presenting the reader with "die andere Wahrheit" (Bu.23). This "other truth" consists virtually of an inversion of the brothers' Grimm fairytale in which the fisherman's wife, Ilsebill, immoderately demands ever more power from the flounder. She continues in this fashion until, due to the excessiveness of her demands, the flounder sends her back to her "Pissput" (Bu.355).[9] In *Der Butt* Grass explores "die andere Wahrheit" of this story, a version of the fairytale which was supposedly burned by Philip Otto Runge many years ago. In this version, dictated to Runge by the old woman, it is man who is portrayed as lacking in all moderation in his desires and demands for supreme power:

> ... im Krieg unbesiegbar will er sein. Brücken über den breitesten Fluß, Häuser und Türme, die bis in die Wolken reichen, schnelle Wagen, weder von Ochs noch Pferd gezogen, Schiffe, die unter Wasser schwimmen, will er bauen, begehen, bewohnen, ans Ziel fahren. Die Welt beherrschen will er, die Natur bezwingen und von der Erde weg sich über sie erheben. (Bu.355/6)

It is this version of history that Grass brings to the fore. In so doing, however, he lays little stress on man's heroic feats of achievement, but rather highlights the negative aspects of man's development: war, power over nature, poverty, famine, and the suppression of women.

The resurgence of feminism in the late 1960's and early 1970's resulted in bringing the issue of the oppression of women into the focus of attention, initiating a general awareness of the inequality existing between the sexes, both socially and politically. Thus, the publication of

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[7] Marcel Reich-Ranicki, "Von dem Grass und synen Fruen," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. (No.186, 13/8/77).
[8] Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, "Von dem Fischer un syner Fru," in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980), Bd. I, pp.119-127.
[9] All further quotations from *Der Butt* shall be given in this manner, with reference to the 5th edition of *Der Butt* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1983).

Der Butt, with its central concern being the relationship between men and women, caused a great debate amongst literary critics as to the feminist/anti-feminist content of the novel.

The major point of contention in this debate lies both in Grass' description of man's historical subjugation of women, and his interpretation of the subsequent role of women in contemporary society. The question raised relates to whether or not Grass has sufficiently overcome the limitations of the "traditional" male attitude towards women in order to illustrate effectively the plight of women in society, both past and present. In this respect it could be argued that thought and behavioural patterns are, to a certain extent, conditioned by the very structure of society. Thus, in a patriarchal system, it is the respective male-orientated "ideology" (referring to a subconscious adherance to the male "cause") that is unwittingly imprinted on the individual throughout his development. And this predisposition, by the very nature of its masculine bias, ensures a measure of discrimination between the sexes, such that women, albeit subconsciously, are held to be the inferior being. This thesis will investigate *Der Butt* in order to establish whether Grass has adequately sublimated his personal thought patterns, as conditioned by society, to enable him to depict more objectively women's role within society. This is something which could, perhaps, be expected of Grass when one considers his rather progressive political speeches, but it shall be ascertained whether or not he is, nevertheless, still a prisoner of the age-old, male-oriented "ideology," and if so why?

Firstly, it should be mentioned that Grass' novel does not merely confine itself to the role of women in contemporary society, as stated above, but harks back to the time of mankind's emergence, in an attempt to trace the cause and development of the female social role. Elements of myth, mystification and history are combined with the seed of contemporary "realism" as the narrator/protagonist figure moves, in his narration, from the mythical Stone Age goddess, Aua, to the fourteenth century mystic, Dorothea von Montau, finally arriving at the contemporary figure of Maria Kuczorra, altogether depicting eleven female cooks. In his attempt, therefore, to define and understand the nature of the historical role of women, the narrator describes the transition from a hypothetical, mythical matriarchy to the reality of

man's violent, historical and contempory patriarchy.

The narrator-figure is well-equipped to relate the history of the sexes, as he has been reincarnated throughout the ages with his consciousness intact. He can, therefore, lay claim to having experienced the various social and political developments occuring in each successive time phase. In this respect the narrator comments:

> Ich, das bin ich jederzeit. Und auch Ilsebill war von Anfang an da. Gegen Ende der Jungzeit erinnere ich unseren ersten Streit . . . (Bu.7)

The reader is, thus, also led to believe that the narrator's contemporary wife, Ilsebill, has accompanied him as cook and companion (either as a wife or a lover) throughout his successive reincarnations. Unlike the narrator, though, if we make this point of interpretation, she retains no knowledge of her previous experiences.

The historical scope of the novel spans four thousand years of man's development. This timeframe is represented by nine chapters, reflecting the nine months of Ilsebill's pregnancy. Each of these chapters colourfully relates a specific time phase and the characters pertaining thereto. There is, however, continuous reflection upon contemporary concerns, which are illustrated by the trial of the flounder, as it is witnessed by the narrator. The role of this flounder is central to the novel, for it is he who has led men through history and advised the narrator/protagonist how to shake off the yoke of matriarchal domination, as practised by the Stone Age Aua through to the Bronze Age Mestwina. He teaches man the powers of logic and calculation, instilling in him, step by step, a thirst for power. Thus, the flounder assumes a pedagogical role, expanding the minds of men until they are able to found and perpetuate a patriarchal society. The achievements of this male-orientde system, however, assume an increasingly negative nature, as history progresses.

It is not until the dire consequences of male domination become truly manifest, that the flounder in ***Der Butt*** renounces his role as advisor and mentor to the male "cause." He now, voluntarily, falls into the hands of three Lesbian feminists. Incensed at the confession that the flounder had aided and abetted the male "cause" throughout history, to the detriment of women, they take him to Berlin for trial by a feminist tribunal. And whilst admitting that his

ideas were fundamentally aggressive and destructive, the flounder condemns man for the misuse of his advice and information. In this respect he duly condemns the figure of the narrator, the implication being that men in general are indicted by such a statement:

> Alle Macht, die ich dir verliehen habe, hast du miβbraucht. Anstatt dein dir gegebenes Recht fürsorglich geltend zu machen, ist dir Herrschaft zur Unterdrückung, ist dir Macht zum Selbstzweck miβraten. (Bu.153)

The flounder complains bitterly that men have failed him. No longer does this god-like figure control the limitations of man's development. For men have become ever more intent in their search for knowledge and power, thus totally beyond the realms of satisfaction, as afforded by the flounder. Henceforth he intends to take it upon himself to advise women in their emancipation from male oppression and to aid them in their fight for the acquisition of social leadership, following man's historical "bankruptsy" (Bu.153), according to the flounder.

It has become apparent from this short synopsis of *Der Butt*, that the novel does indeed lend itself to a feminist interpretation, seen in the light of this overt "message." Those who argue in favour of a feminist perspective contained within the novel, draw on the fact that Grass does, in no way, lay stress on man's positive social, historical or political achievements. On the contrary, what is highlighted, as Noel Thomas comments, is man's ineffectiveness:

> However, though the phallic principle has triumphed and wrought havoc, the narrator and the men who have asserted their sexual and military capabilities are ironically by no means paragons of masculinity. They are, in human terms, failures undermined by their inadequasies and insufficiencies. They are - in keeping with the sexual imagery of the novel - "Schlappschwänze."[10]

And it is through such a keenly felt sense of deficiency that men have been converted into "the monsters of history."[11]

Winnifred R. Adolph takes a step further, developing the view that Grass uses the figure of the female cook in order to uncover the deficiencies, not only inherant in man's personal sphere, but also those shown to be present in his social structures: "Each of the cooks works her way through history, and each cook reveals the shortcomings of the male systems in

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[10] Noel L. Thomas, *The Narrative Works of Günter Grass*. (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 1982), p.289.
[11] *ibid*. p.305.

politics and art."[12]

Grass himself, in interview with Eva Figes, reiterates this very view that *Der Butt* is a compendium of criticisms directed towards his own sex, with the future lying in the hands of women to redress the balance of inequality. His hope is that they would, in doing so, bring forth new ideas which would mollify the violent and insufficient power structures developed by men. In this respect he states that:

> We have had enough of men's stupidity and limitations. I hope that through the emancipation of women, new ideas come into being. A different attitude to power and the use of power, a new approach to the resolution of conflict, we know how disasterous the male solution to conflict has been.[13]

It is this faith in women to take charge of the future, using their influence to restore the equilibrium between the sexes, that is the focal point for the pro-feminist appraisal of *Der Butt*.

It must be stressed, however, that the satirical portrayal of the feminist factions, which Manfred Durzak views as "eine Satire auf aktuelle feministische Gruppierungen in der Bundesrepublik, besonders in Berlin,"[14] does not, according to critics such as Thor Larson[15] and Irmgard Elsner Hunt,[16] detract from Grass' pro-feminist stance. They argue that he still advocates women, albeit "Frauen als Mütter" (Bu.530), as guardians of the future of humanity. Thus Larson states that:

> "Die Frauen als Mütter," die eine Alternative zum männlichen "Moralkanon" und Machtstreben hatten, kamen nie zur Macht, weil die Männer dies immer zu verhindern wußten. Diese Frauen könnten aber, meint Grass, wenn sie solidarisch und unbeirrbar arbeiten, das männliche Macht- und Moralsystem brechen. Denn: "Die Geschichte will weiblich geprägt werden." (Bu.530) Nur dadurch könnten wir unsere Welt retten.[17]

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[12] Winnifred R. Adolph, "The truth told differently: Myth and Irony," in *"The Fisherman and his Wife," Günter Grass' The Flounder in Critical Perspective*, ed.Siegfried Mews (New York: AMS, 1983), pp.121-135, p.125.
[13] Grass in interview with Eva Figes. "Woman Talk," in *The Observer*. (15/10/78), p.37.
[14] Durzak p.310.
[15] Thor Larson, "'Die Geschichte will weiblich geprägt werden.' Zum Feminismus im Roman *Der Butt* von Günter Grass," in *Frauen und Frauenbilder. Osloer Beiträge zur Germanistik*. (Oslo: Reprosentralen, 1983), pp.94-100.
[16] Irmgard Elsner Hunt, *Mütter und Muttermythos in Günter Grass' Roman Der Butt*. (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1983).
[17] Larson p.98.

Thus, if one were to judge from these positive interpretations, and Grass' personal statement, it could be argued that *Der Butt* acts by way of an illustration of Grass' outspoken opinion, namely that the world must be saved from men who, through personal anxiety, lash out violently, causing conflict, destruction and oppression. Further to this, Hildesheimer states that male characters in *Der Butt* are shown to be totally unequalled by women in their capacity for sheer brutality. He comments, in his afore-mentioned open letter to Grass, that this factor must be acknowledged by those of even the most militant feminist persuation:

> Auch von aktivistisch-weiblicher Seite wird man anerkennen müssen, daß Du Dein Geschlecht hier nicht beschönigst, das Masculine wird in all seinen ekelhaften Facetten durchgespielt, der Terror bleibt männlich.[18]

Thus many critics view the novel as pro-feminist in perspective, in that, through the depiction of man's treatment of women throughout the ages, Grass has adequately illustrated not only the shortcomings of male ideologies and political superstructures, but also the personal deficiencies of the masculine ego. Durzak comments in this respect:

> Nein, diese Helden des Roman geben keine Heldengalerie ab für eine Geschichtsschreibung, die die machtvolle Stellung des Patriarchats quasi als Naturgegebenheit sieht. Es sind durchaus schwächliche, von Skrupeln gepeinigte, von Ideologien geschüttelte und von der Geschichte gebeutelte Figuren, die hinter der indirekt ausgeübten Macht der Frauen, auf die sie angewiesen waren oder sind, weit zurückblieben.[19]

Whereas many critics such as Patrick O'Neill,[20] Richard Lawson[21] and A. Leslie Willson [22] appreciate the weight of evidence in favour of a pro-feminist bias, they understand Grass' "message" as a universal appeal to both men and women alike to revise their attitudes to life. For it is made clear in the novel that women are also prone to violent excesses, as illustrated in the "Vatertag" chapter, and that merely a shift of emphasis from men to women will change little, if nothing at all. Willson asserts the opinion that the "Vatertag" chapter is "a

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[18] Hildesheimer p.967.
[19] Durzak p.314.
[20] Patrick O'Neill, "The Scheherazade Syndrome: Günter Grass' Meganovel *Der Butt*," in *Adventures of a Flounder: Critical Essays on Günter Grass' Der Butt*, ed. Gertrud Bauer Pickar (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1982), pp.1-16.
[21] Richard Lawson, *Günter Grass*. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co, 1985).
[22] A. Leslie Willson, "The Numbers Game," in *Adventures of a Flounder*. pp.56-63.

brutal presentation of the thesis that cruelty knows no sex and that a reversal of role changes nothing, rather reinforces extremes."[23] Again, O'Neill highlights the dangers involved in the practice of excesses, and stresses the pedagogical role of *Der Butt* in warning mankind, both men and women alike, to avoid such a course. He states that:

> Grass' novel is neither feminist nor anti-feminist: it is both. The extremes of feminism and masculism alike are satirized, as Grass has always satirized plastic-wrapped ideologies and utopian futures. Perhaps, however, male hegemony has indeed run its course, perhaps it is indeed women's turn, perhaps it may even be better, however threatening for the ensconced male.[24]

These essentially positive views of *Der Butt* are, however, totally rejected by a number of critics who are of the opinion that the novel is, as Silvia Tennenbaum forcefully asserts: "shrilly partisan, filled with anti-feminist sermonizing that runs through the book like a bitter thread."[25]

It is usually the very portrayal of the female characters which incites the criticism that *Der Butt* is written from a male chauvinist viewpoint. For example, the vivid description of "die dicke Gret" is likened by Erhard Friedrichsmeyer to an "obscene and gluttonous male comic figure of literature, a cross between Falstaff and Gargantua. . . . She is unmistakably a male derivative."[26] Whilst her actual actions may seem effective in countering the power of men (note the castration of Hegge, and the murder of both Ferber and Jeschke), the emphasis in the novel is placed on her vulgar and voracious sexual appetite which, as suggested by R. K. Angress, effectively nullifies any trace of a pro-feminist bias:

> Women are always introduced as sex objects, usually genitals first, while for men such treatment remains the exception. The obscenity lies not in the multi-layered vocabulary which Grass employs, but in the reductive effect which undermines any pretense of equality in the treatment of the sexes.[27]

In the case of Agnes Kurbiella, the sixth cook mentioned, quite the opposite criticism is forthcoming. It is her lack of any real identity which comes under fire from critics such as

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[23] *ibid.* p.61.
[24] O'Neill, p.10.
[25] Silvia Tennenbaum, "A Baroque Fish Story," in *Newsday.* (November 1978).
[26] Erhard Friedrichsmeyer, "The Swan Song of a Male Chauvinist," in *"The Fisherman and his Wife."* pp.151-163, p.152/3.
[27] R. K. Angress, *"Der Butt* - a Feminist Perspective," in *Adventures of a Flounder.* pp.43-51, p.43.

Gunzelin Schmid Noerr,[28] Otto Best[29] and Erhard Friedrichsmeyer.[30] Schmid Noerr views Agnes as but one of the female figures used as "blosse Projektionswände für die männlichen Wünsche und Angste,"[31] a character developed only in so far as is necessary to highlight the inner turmoil of the masculine ego. Whilst Friedrichsmeyer comments that "Agnes Kurbiella is a woman as clay, given identity by the male of her first sexual encounter, here grotesquely so by a man initiating gang-rape,"[32] the lobby of anti-feminist criticism gathers considerable momentum when faced with the "Vatertag" chapter, with the emphasis falling naturally on the Lesbian rape scene. In this particular episode it is the depiction of the Lesbians, who are militant feminists, which gives rise to anti-feminist criticism. In this case, Lawson understands the main point of contention to be "the equation that he [Grass] makes between feminism - or at least feminism as the bearer of the torch of power and Lesbianism."[33] For the portrayal of the Lesbians in this scene is highly satirical in nature and succeeds in adding spice to the cliché that all militant feminists are, naturally, Lesbians. Hanspeter Brode comments, in this respect: "Billy und ihre Freundinnen verkörpern im Bemühen, die Männer überflüssig zu machen, eine besonders radikal überspitzte Form des Feminismus."[34] It is precisely this misrepresentation of the nature and goals of feminists which further prompts Angress to state that Grass "presents us with a book basically hostile to the women's movement and ignorant of that movement's aspirations."[35]

The view submitted by those who assert that there is indeed a feminist perspective contained within the novel, and that Grass does succeed in this by denouncing the male ego as essentially depraved, is totally rejected by Marielouise Janssen-Jurreit in her article

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[28] Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, "Über den Butt," *Text + Kritik* ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. No. 1/1a 5th ed. (June 1978), pp.90-93.
[29] Otto F. Best, "On the Art of Garnishing a Flounder with 'Chestnuts' and Serving it up as a Myth," in *The Fisherman and his Wife* pp.135-151.
[30] See note 26.
[31] Schmid Noerr p.92.
[32] Friedrichsmeyer p.153.
[33] Lawson p.129.
[34] Hanspeter Brode, *Günter Grass.* (München: Verlag Edition Text + Kritik, 1979), p.193.
[35] Angress p.43.

sarcastically entitled: "Tragische, kaputte Endzielmänner. Günter Grass' männerkritischer (?) Roman aus feministischer Sicht."[36] She views this technique of apparent denunciation as a form of chauvinistic apology on behalf of all men, and totally denies any suggestion that Grass could, in any way, seriously wish to redress the balance of the sexes. She writes: "Er [Grass] will sich selbst als Unterdrücker denunzieren, aber denoch enthält *Der Butt* nichts anders als ein Plädoyer für den Mann."[37] She further decries Grass' use of grotesque and "novelty" subject matter as a means of masking the anti-feminist nature of the novel:

> *Der Butt* ist . . . ein extrem frauenfeindliches, uneinsichtbares Buch, das nicht auf Analyse, Aufklärung, sondern auf Schaueffekte setzt und bürgerliches Publikum durch neue Tabubrüche faszinieren will. Vitalitätsprotzerei, grobische Sprache, Furzen und Rülpsen, das ganze Panoptikum einer vorindustriellen Welt, wirken wie eine Zirkusvorstellung, nicht wie eine geschichtliche Bilanz der Geschlechterbeziehung.[38]

In the assessment of the literary criticism in which *Der Butt* is condemned as an anti-feminist novel, basically hostile to the women's movement, it can be seen that most such negative appraisals are of a highly nebulous nature. Emotionally-charged judgements denounce the novel as patronizing in the extreme, and yet rarely do such derisory comments contain exact textual criticisms, but rather find fault with the book in its entirity, without pinpointing the cause. Such criticisms are, moreover, often contradictory in nature. Some judge Grass as chauvinistic due to the blandness of various of his female figures, whose characters remain opaque and lifeless, whilst others condemn him as anti-feminist for his powerful and often witty portrayal of other women, such as "die dicke Gret." Criticisms of such kind are too superficial and vague to be considered as concrete and valid evidence of an anti-feminist position. For one could argue with ease that virtually every female figure, be she dull or vivacious, has a male counterpart contained somewhere within the novel. Undoubtedly, though, such critics have sensed an anti-feminist tendency, but have looked, for the most part, to the thematic content in their search to explain their conviction. Within this approach it was not often realised that this anti-feminist tendency, which was clearly felt, must consequently (if it

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[36] In *Die Weltwoche* (Zürich, 17/8/77), p.25.
[37] *ibid.*
[38] *ibid.*

cannot be grasped in the content structure of the novel), be triggered by an undercurrent coursing through the novel; that is to say, by the use of imagery and language.

In an attempt to tap this, as yet only suspected anti-feminist source, a more objective approach to the text must be adopted. In this respect, Freud's theories of psycho-sexual analysis lend themselves as a very useful model and instrument to unravel the subconscious level of meaning existing behind the thoughts and actions of the characters in *Der Butt*. This refers to a meaning which may, to all intents and purposes, be totally contradictory to the thought which is "consciously" expressed, or the action which is "deliberately" performed.

What Freud reveals in his various case-studies and theories is a deeper level of meaning which may remain concealed behind a screen of superficial intent. This "deeper level of meaning" is essentially a force which dominates behaviour modes and thought patterns, but which, nevertheless, remains hidden from mere superficial investigation, because it emanates from a subconscious level of the psyche. Thus Freud, in his appraisal of the Moses of Michelangelo, comments on the method of psychoanalysis as a means of bringing to light hidden aspects of a work, and diverting attention towards seemingly insignificant features, thereby revealing a wealth of meaning which may, hitherto, have escaped notice. He states that psychoanalysis "is accustomed to divine secret and concealed things from despised or unnoticed features, from the rubbish-heap, as it were, of our observations."[39]

Thus Freud's theories of psychoanalysis shall be used in an interpretation of Günter Grass' novel *Der Butt*, in order to divine a deeper level of meaning existing beneath a superficial understanding of certain images, and particular behavioural patterns of various characters contained within the novel.

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[39] Freud, "The Moses of Michelangelo," (1913-1914), *S.E.* Vol XIII, p.222. Throughout this thesis, quotations from Freud's work are taken from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, translated and under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1964 edition). For all further references to this edition, I have used the abbreviation *S.E.*

One could, perhaps, claim that, should *Der Butt* lend itself to an interpretation in the light of Freud's theories, then there must, necessarily, exist a common link between the two. Indeed, further justification for using such a model rests on Grass' obvious awareness and actual use of such Freudian terminology as the "pleasure principle" (Bu.141), the "Oedipus complex" (Bu.485) and "penis-envy" (Bu.302). These terms are loaded with psycho-sexual connotations, and indicate a knowledge of the workings of Freudian theories of psychoanalysis and infantile sexual development.

If, through an interpretation of *Der Butt*, a close connection is shown to exist between Freud's theories and Grass' literary text, then it could, perhaps, be argued that *Der Butt* contains similar anti-feminist tendencies as those which are known to exist in Freudian theory. For it is well known that Freud's theories contain an extremly phallocentric bias, whereby the emphasis rests on the man as the founder and perpetuator of social and moral codes, thus performing an active role within the social system. Women, however, are depicted in the classically passive role of wives and mothers; women who will remain essentially ineffectual in a politically active capacity, because of the very nature of their sex. For they do not possess the power of men, as possessors of the phallus.

If one were to take a closer look at Freud's patriarchal theory concerning the foundation and perpetuation of a cultured society, it soon becomes apparent that this theory virtually negates the role of women in such an instance, whilst relying heavily on the role of the father figure. For it is through the "Symbolic Father," according to Freud, that social and moral codes initially became established and that these are then passed on to each successive generation through the acquisition of what Freud termed the "super-ego." This process essentially represents a subconscious acceptance of one's cultural heritage, which is passed down to the individual through the father-figure. What is interesting to note, however, is that the emphasis is placed on the male individual as the acquirer of this strict set of mores. For Freud contends that women are, by nature, governed more by instinctual impulses, whilst he maintains that, at a certain stage of development, the boy is able to sublimate these impulses

for the good of the social body.

Freud's explanation of the boy's sexual development stresses the fact that he must, by necessity, overcome his instinctual sexual attachment to his mother. In doing so he must accept the intervention of the father, and thereby accept the moral and social constraints of society as embodied within this father-figure. The boy thus progresses from a state of primitiveness, as symbolised by his maternal dependence, to a level of cultural awareness, through an identification with the father. The implication of this theory is that maternal influence is detrimental to the progress of a cultured civilisation. And it is this theory which can perhaps be seen to be illustrated and embellished in the novel *Der Butt*, through the depiction of the transition from a mythical matriarchy to patriarchal society. Hence a progression from primitivness to culture: from mother to father-figure. In both cases, namely Freudian theory and Grass' novel, the emphasis lies on the stifling role of women, where mankind's development is concerned. This particular topic shall be discussed in chapter two of this thesis. It should be noted, however, that such anti-feminist tendencies, which are a composite element of Freud's appraisal of the foundation and perpetuation of patriarchal society, are in no way confined to this one particular aspect of his work.

It can be clearly stated that Freudian theory is, by definition, extremely phallocentric. And this very bias towards the supremacy of the male, as possessor of the power of the phallus, could be understood as an anti-feminist statement. For women, by the propounding of this very theory, are subjugated to an eternal role either of passivity or disatisfaction. According to Freud, women must realise that they can never attain the power of the phallus and must, therefore, accept the passive role in the relationship between the sexes. Should they aspire to attain the phallus, the psychological consequences of this are usually to be explained, by Freud, in terms of the sexual aberrations of women. In either case the female psyche is essentially negated, in the sense that dreams of equality with men are, and will remain, a mere desire on women's part; a desire which can never be realised. Thus women, if one were to follow the logic of Freudian doctrine, are destined either to fulfil their historical "feminine" role as

passive and oppressed individuals, or, should they aspire to dreams of equality or even domination over men, are held to be suffering acute envy of the male phallus; the symbol of masculine power. They are, in this case, considered as being out of step with their "natural" role. Various female figures in Grass' novel *Der Butt* will be analysed with respect to the anti-feminist elements inherent in the Freudian theory of "Penisneid." This aspect shall be discussed in the third chapter of this thesis.

The fourth chapter will differ slightly from this vein of thought. Whilst equating the loss of the third breast, which will be explained later, with the Freudian explanation of the consequences that the loss of the breast entails for the infant, the main consideration shall concern the appraisal of the image of the third breast as a reaffirmation of the traditional male "Wunschtraum." It is this attitude, influenced by a male-oriented society, which perpetuates the notion of women as the "second sex."

In order to determine and clarify the anti-feminist tendencies which are presumed to exist in *Der Butt*, I shall interpret the novel in the light of Freudian theories of psychoanalysis. The emphasis shall rest on the anti-feminist elements of these theories which, if they can be successfully applied in an interpretation of *Der Butt*, would verify the suspicion that similar tendencies are indeed present in the novel. By means of Freudian analysis, it shall be disclosed that both Freud's theories and Grass' novel incorporate anti-feminist factors; factors which exist behind a mere superficial appraisal of either Freud's works or *Der Butt*. This shall be revealed by extracting the "content-purport" from the text, as opposed to a superficial interpretation of the content. The term "content-purport" was explained by Louis Hjelmslev, in his book entitled *Prologomena to a Theory of Language*,[40] as referring to the thought existing behind the "expression plane" and "content-plane" (as he termed the "signifier" and "signified", in Saussurian terminology). Hjelmslev explains that the "content-purport" "exists provisionally as an amorphous mass, an unanalized entity,"[41] whilst Francesco Orlando

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[40] (Madison/Milwaukee/London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961).
[41] *ibid*. p.50.

reiterates the point that the "content-purport" "has no individual linguistic existence."[42]

In a further explanation of this term, Hjelmslev uses, as a linguistic illustration, the French and English phrases "Je ne sais pas" and "I do not know" in order to show that, whilst containing different "expression-forms," they are merely a reformulation of the same idea. He states that they, "despite all their differences, have a factor in common, namely the purport, the thought itself."[43] It is the extraction of this potential "content-purport," that is to say the thought/meaning behind the language and thematic content of *Der Butt*, which represents a major task of this thesis. This shall be achieved through an interpretation of Grass' literary text from the perspective of Freud's psychoanalytical texts, thus reducing and ascertaining whether or not *Der Butt* can be assessed as a reformulation of the "expression-form" of certain Freudian theories of human psychology.

With respect to the assessment of this common "content-purport," Orlando expresses the need for three discourses. Two of these must be identified as containing a common link, with the third performing an interpretive and evaluating function:

> One cannot speak of "content-purport" unless at least three discourses are involved: two that supposedly have a common "content-purport" and a third that abstracts it as something shared by the other two, a formulation, a reformulation, and a confirmation, if only implicit, in their relationship. I would say that in Freud's book the examples of jokes constitute the first discourse, the proposed reductions the second, and the comments that precede and follow the comparison, which take advantage of the abstraction of the "content-purport," the third. I believe that any interpretive work aiming at objectivity proceeds in essentially the same manner when dealing with any kind of literary text, as long as its main concern is the message.[44]

An interpretation of *Der Butt*, from a Freudian perspective, will disclose the fact that the "content-purport" of the two discourses are indeed similar in many respects. And it shall be shown that, though Grass may well have intended a feminist perspective, namely a move away from the mainstream of the machismo and patriarchal style of male literature by highlighting

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[42] Francesco Orlando, *Toward a Freudian Theory of Literature, with an Analysis of Racine's Phèdre*. (Baltimore and London: John Hopkin University Press, 1978), p.146.
[43] Hjelmslev p.50.
[44] Orlando p.151.

the deficiencies of the masculine ego, what he has actually produced is a novel that reaffirms the supremacy of male "ideology." In this respect *Der Butt* could be considered as a reassertion of man's condescending attitude towards women: hence, in Freudian terminology, a reaffirmation of the male ideology of the primacy of the phallus.

It is this notion of male supremacy that dominates Freud's theory concerning the foundation and perpetuation of cultured civilisation. This theory, therefore, in so far as it can be successfuly applied in an interpretation of Grass' *Der Butt*, shall form the core of the following chapter. The emphasis shall rest on the anti-feminist tendencies manifest in both the theory and the literary text.

2. "The Law of the Father"- The Patriarchal Principle of Cultured Civilisation

2.1 Sigmund Freud's Historical Interpretation of the Foundations of Patriarchal Society as Reflected in *Der Butt*

Both Freud's historical and psychoanalytical interpretation of the foundation and perpetuation respectively of cultured civilisation lays great stress on the importance of the father-figure as the instigator of moral and social values. An interpretation of Grass' novel *Der Butt*, from the perspective of Freud's theories concerning the development of infantile sexuality, both up to and beyond the Oedipus complex, will yield the view that Grass artistically portrays and, in so doing, exaggerates much of what Freud's theories assert. The implication drawn from such an appraisal is that both statements reveal anti-feminist tendencies, for both indict women by the suggestion of their sexual immorality. The basis of cultured society is depicted as resting solely on the "Law of the Father"[45] whose influence, according to Freud, led man to progress from a state in which instinctual impulses dominated, as manifest in the practise of incest, to a state in which these basic impulses were repressed. The results of such a process are explained in terms of the formation of a social unit governed by a set of moral and social codes; hence the establishment of cultured civilisation.

Freud, in his historical interpretation of man's transition from a primal horde to a civilised social body, lays great stress on the abolition of incest as the fundamental basis for society. From this, as he sees it, sprang moral and social values, and in this respect he asserts that "society must defend itself against the danger that the interests it needs for the establishment of higher social units may be swallowed up by the family."[46]

In his book entitled *Totem and Taboo*,[47] Freud conjectures that there must originally

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[45] In this respect Jacques Lacan asserts: "C'est dans le nom du père qu'il nous faut reconnaître le support de la fonction symbolique qui, depuis l'orée des temps historiques, identifie sa personne a la figure de la loi." In Jacques Lacan, "Fonction et Champ de la Parole et du Language," in *Ecrits; Le Champ Freudien.* (Paris: Editions Du Seuil, 1966), p.278.
[46] "Three Essays on Sexuality," (1905), *S.E.* Vol. VII, p.225.
[47] *S.E.* Vol. XIII.

have been a primal horde dominated by a powerful father who, due to his excessive powers, had sexual control over all the women of his tribe. Thus the younger men were denied any sexual satisfaction. From this state of sexual deprivation, the sons of the father banded together in the hope of usurping his power. And whilst their filial affection was temporarily obscured by their extreme jealousy, they committed patricide and subsequently devoured the flesh of the father, in what is termed the original "totem meal." But having once carried out this deed, they were filled with remorse, because of their deep-seated affection for their father. So strong was their sense of guilt that they could no longer enjoy the fruits of their crime, instead they forbade the killing of the father-substitute (the totem figure), and refrained from polygamous and incestuous relations with the women of the horde. Freud hypothesises that it is from this mythical episode that the two fundamental taboos of totemism stem, prohibiting both murder and incest. And with these taboos arose the beginnings of conscience and morality (the basis of civilised society), through the reverence of this now "Symbolic Father."

W. Wundt reiterates Freud's theory that totemism marks the era of civilised society:

> At some time totemic culture everywhere paved the way for a more advanced civilisation, and thus, it represents a transitional stage between the age of primitive men and the era of heroes and gods.[41]

This "age of primitive men" could perhaps be seen to be depicted in *Der Butt* in the form of the matriarchal order, whilst the "advanced civilisation" could be understood to equate with the institution of the patriarchal order. Grass further illustrates the cultural aspects of the patriarchy by contrasting it with the depravity and unprogressive nature of the matriarchal horde. For it is only with the overthrow of this "primitive" organisation that strict moral and social laws come into existence.

It could perhaps be conjectured that Grass employs, albeit unwittingly, the Freudian model of the historical basis for human cultured civilisation, but exaggerates the instinctual and unprogressive nature of this first primitive organisation by inverting the Freudian model. Instead of presenting an incestuous horde dominated by a single father-figure, he actively

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[41] W. Wundt, *Elemente der Völkerpsychologie.* (Leipzig, 1912), Trans. *Elements of Folk Psychology.* (New York and London, 1916), p.139.

locates the sexually immoral, and culturally unprogressive aspects of incest and polygamy in the figure of Aua, the "Symbolic Mother." This is an extremely patronizing depiction in that it credits women with few progressive achievements.

Aua is described as "dieser dreibrüstige Ausbund geschichtsloser Weiblichkeit" (Bu.30), who maintains her tribe for a long time in a state of social stagnation due to the incestuous inter-relationships between the members of her tribe. This creates a vicious circle of repetition, effectively denying social development. The flounder, in conversation with the narrator-projection, Edek, highlights the incestuous nature of the horde:

> Doch ihr lottert noch immer in Unzucht und wißt nicht, was zeugen heißt. Die Mutter stöpselt sich mit dem Sohn. Die Schwester weiß nicht, daß ihr der Bruder Spaß macht. Nichtsahnend beschattet der Vater die Tochter. (Bu.35/6)

The licentiousness of this matriarchal horde is also indicated, in that Aua succumbs to the temptation to copulate with a white elk bull. She is shown to fulfil her sexual impulses even to the extremes of bestiality, stressing the depravity of her organisation, and with it the Freudian assertion that women's actions are directed far more by instinctual impulses than those of men. This particular episode relates to the myth of Pasiphae and the Minotaur, and, just as in the myth, it is a woman who is incited to display her sexual depravity by copulating with a bull, thus illustrating "die Zuchtlosigkeit des Mutterrechts" (Bu.100).

The rest of the tribal women are also portrayed as immoral, namely in their tribal rituals. One of these is reminiscent of the myth of Bachus in which women don fawn skins and conduct wild orgies. This refers of course to the ritual in *Der Butt*, in which the women clothe themselves in doe skins and force the men to participate in the ceremony:

> Sie [Aua] und ihresgleichen kleideten sich (nach meiner Schneiderkunst) in Elchkuhfelle. Wir Edeks mußten uns mit dem Schaufelgeweih der Elchbullen behelmen. Wie echt röhrendes Brunstgeschrei wurde uns abverlangt. Unter hochgebundenem Kuhschwanz hielten die Weiber hin. Tierischer ging es nicht. (Bu.101)

It is only with the death of Aua and finally of Mestwina that strict moral and social codes are erected. It is not, however, as a direct result of their deaths that civilised society becomes established. Although the Freudian model can be understood as inverted by Grass,

with the substitution of a woman in place of Freud's "primal father," it shall be shown that, despite this, the establishment of a cultured civilisation, nevertheless, still rests on the "Law of the Father."

The flounder, who is instrumental in the development and "emancipation" of men, becomes the founder of cultured civilisation, his role being likened, perhaps, to the totem figure of primal man. This totem figure, according to Freud, is an object/animal/plant which, through superstitious belief, is held to be a protector and sacred omen to its subjects. They, in turn, protect and rever their totem. J.G. Frazer in his book entiled *Totemism and Exogamy* states that:

> The connection between a man and his totem is mutually beneficient; the totem protects the man, and the man shows his respect for the totem in various ways, by not killing it if it be an animal, and not cutting or gathering it if it be a plant.[49]

He continues that there are three types of totem, the most appropriate to our discussion of the role of the flounder being:

> ... the sex totem, common either to all the male or to all the females of the tribe, to the exclusion in either case of the other sex.[50]

This seems to be the important classification because the flounder, in his paternal/ advisory capacity, reveals himself in connection only to men, namely the successive narrator-projections. And in this respect he fulfils the role of father-figure, which is yet another important feature of the totem figure. For Freud states that "the totem animal is in reality a substitute for the father."[51] Thus a mutually beneficient relationship is established, for the flounder proffers advice and information, whilst the narrator-projection, in his turn, does not betray him to the women of the tribe. Despite the fact that he is pointed out by the men of the horde as the initiator in the practise of forging metal implements, the narrator-projection remains loyal to the flounder, in spite of the repercussions:

> Aller Verdacht blieb an mir hängen, weil die anderen Edeks geständig auf mich wiesen. Ich log mir Zufälle zusammen und verriet den Butt nicht. Zur

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[49] (London, 1910), Vol I, p.3.
[50] *ibid.*
[51] *Totem and Taboo.* (1912-1913), *S.E.* Vol XIII, p.141.

> Strafe wurde mir einen harten Winter lang von allen Weibern die Brust und der warme Rest verweigert. (Bu.30)
>
> Denn so sehr ich die Verweigerung der täglich dreimal stillenden Brust als mutterrechtliche Strafe zu fürchten gelernt hatte, der Butt war stärker. . . . (Bu.26)

Another important feature of Freud's historical interpretation of the founding of cultured civilisation is the "totem meal," whereby the sons devoured the flesh of the father. In so doing they gained some of the father's power, thus completing their identification with him. The successive rituals involving eating of the flesh of the totem/father substitute succeed in reaffirming an awareness of the original deed and the consequences thereof, in terms of the establishment of social and moral codes. Freud comments that:

> The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers, and that in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength. The totem meal which is perhaps mankind's earliest festival, would thus be a repetition and a commemoration of this memorable and criminal deed, which was the beginning of so many things - of social organisation, of moral restriction and of religion.[52]

Although Aua's flesh was devoured by the tribe (cf.Bu.305), it cannot be totally construed as a totem meal, for their is no hint of any subsequent commemoration, nor is any concrete progress made by mankind. Whereas the murder and devouring of the elk bull could perhaps be classed as a totem meal in that the death of this beast, which is the epitomy of masculinity, marks the progression of the narrator-projection from a state of ignorance to an awareness of the power inherent in the phallus. For he becomes conscious of the power of his own masculinity: ". . . jetzt war ich aufgeklärt und begann ein Wort für Vater zu suchen"[53] (Bu.103).

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[52] *ibid*. p.142.

[53] Erich Neumann comments on the comprehension of "Vaterrecht" as an expression of masculine consciousness, as it is embodied in the "Law of the Father": "Starting from the final product of this process of development, from consciousness, with which he identifies himself, the male proceeds to deny the genetic principle, which is precisely the basic principle of the matriarchal world. Or, mythologically speaking, he murders his mother and undertakes the patriarchal revaluation by which the son identified with the father. . . ."
The Great Mother. (Princeton, N.J.:Princeton University Press, 1970), p.58.

It is the flounder, though, who, in part, fulfils the role of Freud's hypothetical primal father, for he is shown to possess Aua sexually, who is symbolic of all women. The result of this sexual union is the disappearance of the third breast. And, although he himself is not killed, he is symbolically devoured by successive generations of man, who may now, perhaps, be oblivious to the flounder's role as "Symbolic Father." Thus the flounder comments to the narrator-projection:

> Später, wenn ihr unmündigen und von jung an vertrottelten Männer euch endlich, indem ihr Münzen prägt, Geschichte datiert und dem Vaterrecht Geltung verschafft, von der Mutterbrust, ich sage endlich, nach sechstausend Jahren Weiberfürsorge emanzipieren werdet, wird man meinesgleichen, den Stein-, auch den Glattbutt, in Weißwein dünsten, mit Kapern abschmecken, in Gelee einschließen, köstlich mit Soßen verfremden und auf sächsischem Porzellan servieren. (Bu.34)

These totem meals represent, albeit unwittingly, a reaffirmation of the supremacy of the masculine principle, as it is embodied in the "Symbolic Father." The most striking depiction of such a totem meal appears at the culmination of the feminist tribunal. The ritual "Buttessen" (Bu.534/6), as carried out by the feminists, becomes highly ironic when seen in this context. For in partaking of the flesh of the flounder in such a ritualistic manner, which could be interpreted as a totem meal, they are not, in effect denouncing but reconfirming the power of the "Symbolic Father"; the founder and perpetuator of the patriarchal system.

The flounder is initially worshipped as a God in secret by the men, but he is subsequently "officially" deified by the priestess Mestwina. The description of this God is unmistakable, for it is none other than the flounder himself; "das zerstörende . . . männliche, kriegerische Prinzip" (Bu.527), who is to be worshipped ironically even by women:

> Und Mestwina- als Köchin auch Priesterin- opferte dem Gott Ryb, der flachleibig, plattköpfig, schiefmäulig und deshalb dem sprechenden Butt ähnlich gewesen ist. (Bu.88)

This ironic twist is similar to that of the "Buttessen" ritual, for the women are actually sacrificing to the being from whom stems the power of the patriarchal order, and who is, therefore, ultimately responsible for the collapse of their matriarchal civilisation.

With the dissolution of the matriarchy ends incest and polygamy. J. G. Frazer states that the legal repression of mankind's instinctual, incestuous impulses is a necessary step towards the realisation of a cultured society:

> Instead of assuming . . . from the legal prohibition of incest that there is a natural aversion to incest, we ought rather to assume that there is a natural instinct in favour of it, and that if the law represses it, as it represses other natural instincts, it does so because civilised men have come to the conclusion that the satisfaction of these natural instincts is detrimental to the general interests of society.[54]

Thus such sexual laws prohibiting intercourse between closely related individuals is regarded as the basis for a civilised society; laws which are regulated and enforced by the legal marital exchange of women.[55] It is this systematic exchange of women that supposedly distinguishes man from all other primates. Claude Lévi-Strauss asserts that:

> The reciprocal bond basic to marriage is not set up between men and women, but between men and men by means of women, who are only the principal occasion for it.[56]

Thus, in his depiction of the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, Grass highlights the dissolution of an organisation run, for the most part, on instinct (as emphasised by the practise of incest), to a system which is necessarily more civilised by the very abolition of incestuous bonds through the instigation of marriage. Whereas the matriarchal order is described as incestuous and primitive, the establishment of patriarchy is marked by the acquisition of cultural, moral and social values. Thus the primitive exchange of men has been transformed into the institution of marriage; an act of exchange which, by its very nature, denotes a certain status, marking women with a socially inferior status.

Society under women's rule is, thus, shown by Grass to be unprogressive in all respects. His depiction of the feminist factional squabbles which are narrated at the same time as the

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[54] Frazer Vol IV, p.97.

[55] Jacques Lacan comments: "La loi primordiale est donc celle qui en réglant l'alliance superpose le règne de la culture au règne de la nature livré a la loi de l'accrouplement."
Jacques Lacan p.278.

[56] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Les Structures Elementaires de la Parenté*. (1949), cited by Simone de Beauvoir in her account, "The Early Tiller of the Soil," in *The Second Sex* (Johnathon Cape, 1960), p.96.

description of the matriarchy, attests to the fact that women can achieve little positive within the political sphere. The flounder sarcastically comments with regard to the tribunal proceedings: "Neue Abstimmung, neue Sitzordnung. Grossartig! So werden die Damen in Bewegung bleiben" (Bu.93). The final irony occurs in the tribunal's summation of the attributes of the matriarchal system, which Grass locates in the mouths of the feminists: ". . . auch gäbe es keinen Staat" (Bu.51).

Thus, through the abolition of the matriarchal system, civilised society, in the form of a patriarchy, becomes established. This is instigated only by the intervention of the flounder who, in many respects, could be understood as analoguous to Freud's hypothetical "primal father." And it is through this "Symbolic Father" alone, that civilisation progresses from a state of primitiveness to what can be classed as a cultured society. The fact that the feminine influence is totally negated, in both Freud's historical analysis and in Grass' novel *Der Butt*, in order to make way for the instigation of morality and social order, stresses the anti-feminist nature of both discourses.

Freud's historical interpretation of the foundation of civilisation through the "Symbolic Father" also has great significance in his psychoanalytical evaluation of the development of a male infant. For it is through the intervention of the "Symbolic Father," and the subsequent recognition of his "laws," that the boy, according to Freud, develops from being an entity, driven by instinctual impulses, to an individual with a social and moral conscience. An appraisal of the process, described by Freud, of the sublimation of these instinctual impulses (which centre on the boy's initial incestuous desires for union with his mother), and the child's subsequent adoption of the moral and social values (as defined by the "Law of the Father"), will further bring to light his negative assessment of the role of women. For, once again, it is only by means of abolishing feminine influence that moral and social awareness is assured in the child, and thus the perpetuation of civilised society. An interpretation of *Der Butt*, from the perspective of Freud's theories concerning infantile sexuality, will reveal similarities between the two texts, with the emphasis falling on the anti-feminist tendencies existing in both.

2.2 Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytical Interpretation of the Perpetuation of Patriarchal Society as Reflected in *Der Butt*

There is a parallel made between Freud's interpretation of the foundations of cultured civilisation, and his subsequent psychoanalytical evaluation of the perpetuation of such a society. In both cases, the emphasis is placed heavily on the role of the "Symbolic Father." But in the case of the development of male infantile sexuality, he conjectures that the boy's dependence and subsequent desire for the mother, termed the "Oedipus complex," must be surmounted in order for the child to gain a set of moral and social values. Freud's assertions reveal that, again, it is the woman who is to be understood as a negative factor; an obstacle between the child and the acquisition of his cultural heritage. And it is the father-figure, in whom certain aspects of the "Symbolic Father" can be seen to be incarnate, whose role it is to break the Oedipal bond existing between mother and son.

The actual myth of Oedipus, as enacted in the extant Greek tragedy by Sophocles *Oedipus Rex*, tells of how a prophesy, that the child Oedipus would kill his father and subsequently sleep with his mother, is ultimately fulfilled. Despite all the precautions taken in order that the prediction might remain unfulfilled, Oedipus does kill king Laius of Thebes, who, unbeknown to Oedipus, is his natural father. He then enters Thebes as a hero, having answered the riddle of the Sphinx whose presence threatened the city-dwellers. And in his capacity as Saviour of Thebes, he marries Jocasta, the wife of the murdered king Laius, and his natural mother. The blame for the incestuous relationship cannot rest solely on either individual, for it is made perfectly clear that it was their fate to form such a union. But the mythical justification does not conceal the fact that Jocasta, unlike Oedipus, was aware of the prophesy from his birth. And at one point in Sophocles' tragedy, fearing the unveiling of the awful truth, she calls on Oedipus to pay no heed to the prophesy. She reflects that it is neither unusual nor diabolical that such an incestuous relationship should occur:

> Best to live lightly, as one can, unthinkingly.
> As to your mother's marriage bed- don't fear it,
> Before this, in dreams too, as well as oracles,

Many a man has lain with his own mother.[57]

Jocasta's words reveal virtually a condonement, on her part, of their predetermined situation and an acknowledgement of the natural incestuous desires of the son. Desires which must, however, be reciprocated by the mother in order to bear fruition.

Freud took the myth of Oedipus as the basis for his psychoanalytical research into infantile sexuality, stating that fundamental similarities exist between the myth and the reality of infantile sexual development. He coined the term "Oedipus Complex" (1910), in order to explain the incestuous desires existing between mother and son; a bond which must be broken by the intervention of a third party, namely the father, if the child is to succeed in acquiring a sense of moral and social awareness. This theory could perhaps be understood as anti-feminist in nature for it suggests that, without the intervention of the father, the mother would submit to her own incestuous desires and join in sexual union with the son. Thus, it is, by implication, the mother who is indicted as a temptress, just as in Christian belief it was the fault of Eve, tempting Adam with the apple of knowledge, which led to the Fall of Man, symbolised by their banishment from paradise. Freud emphasises that the boy must necessarily repress his desires for this incestuous union in order to enter into society as a responsible, moral individual. And it is the presence of the father who breaks this incestuous bond and ultimately forces the boy to accept the moral and social constraints of society.

According to Freud, the pre-Oedipal phase of infancy is characterised by the child's overwhelming dependence on the mother to fulfil his basic needs of nourishment, warmth and protection. From this stem the seeds of sexual desire which, he asserts, are subconsciously reciprocated by the mother.[58] For it is Freud's theory that the mother treats her baby, especially if it is a boy, as a fulfilment of her subconscious desires for a penis. In so doing, she

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[57] Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* Translated by David Greene. in *Sophocles I.* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p.52, lines 979-982.

[58] Freud, in his book entitled *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, noted that "aggressiveness . . . forms the basis of every relation of affection and love among people (with the single exception, perhaps, of the mother's relation to her *male* child)," thus stressing the unusually strong (sexual) bond existing in such a relationship. *S.E. Vol XXI, p.113.*

thus subconsciously arouses and reciprocates the boy's growing sexual desires. Freud comments in this respect that:

> A child's intercourse with anyone responsible for his care affords him an unending source of sexual excitation and satisfaction from his erotogenic zones. This is especially so since the person in charge of him, who, after all, is as a rule his mother, herself regards him with feelings that are derived from her own sexual life: she strokes him, kisses him, rocks him and quite clearly treats him as a substitute for a complete sexual object.[59]

On entering into the phallic phase, Freud concludes, that the boy has already recognised the form of the mother's desire, that is to say, for a phallus. Thus the boy desires to be the phallus for the mother and fulfil her penis envy. It is at this stage that the Oedipus complex is formed in full, with the symbolic reciprocation of maternal/filial desires. The indictment rests heavily on the woman though, for it is, fundamentally, her desire for a phallus which leads the boy to respond accordingly. Freud, with regard to the woman's subconscious wish to possess a child as a substitute for a penis, states:

> The girl's libido slips into a new position along the line - there is no other way of putting it - of the equation "penis-child." She gives up her wish for a penis and puts in place of it a wish for a child.[60]

Thus the woman's penis envy is shown to lie at the root of the boy's maternal fixation.

The potential incest between mother and son which would, as in the myth, inevitably lead to the actual realisation of the sexual desires, must, Freud claims, be broken by the father. It is he who is to come between mother and son. For the child subsequently learns that the father has the power actually to possess the mother and to castrate the child as a punishment for his desires. He must thus accept symbolic castration, namely the realisation that, for the moment at least, he must submit to the power of the father. In so doing the child acknowledges that he himself has great potential and will, one day, himself possess the power of the phallus. And in his acceptance of the "Law of the Father," in the form of a denunciation of his incestuous desires, the boy accepts the acquisition of social and moral codes (the super-ego), and enters into his patriarchal, cultural heritage. Freud comments that:

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[59] "Three Essays on Sexuality," *S.E.* Vol VII, p.223.
[60] "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes" (1925), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.256.

> The catastrophe to the Oedipus complex (the abandonment of incest and the institution of conscience and morality), may be regarded as a victory of the race over the individual.[61]

Therefore, it is through the acquisition of the super-ego, the "Law of the Father," that the perpetuation of social morality is guaranteed.

The woman, thus in Freudian theories, is depicted as a temptress, who must ultimately be rejected by the son if he is to take his "rightful" place in the patriarchal order. Freud virtually denies that women are culturally progressive, rather he purports that the onus lies on the man to establish and maintain moral and social order. He states that:

> The male sex seems to have taken the lead in all these moral acquisitions, and they seem to have then been transmitted to women by crossinheritance.[62]

Already a brief analysis of *Der Butt* will show that certain elements of the Freudian concept of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, through the "Law of the Father," are to be discerned in the novel, but that the anti-feminist tendencies inherant therein are accentuated in this artistic depiction. Thus it shall be concluded that through an artistic portrayal of the Oedipus complex and the use of mythology, Grass effectively indicts women as debauched temptresses. And it is from their maternal dependence that men must be weaned in order to establish and perpetuate a culturally and morally advanced society, namely a society founded on the male principle.

Grass portrays mankind's development from a primal horde ruled by women, to the undoubtedly more civilised and cultured form of existence, as we know it, namely as city-dwellers; a society in which men dominate totally. This process of civilisation can be seen, in Freudian terms, to parallel a male infant's progression from a state of maternal dependence (the pre-Oedipal phase), through to the incestuous desires of the Oedipus complex; the surmounting of which leads the boy to a realisation of society's expectations, and an adoption of the social and moral laws of that body. In his book entitled *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, Freud states that:

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[61] *ibid.* p.257.
[62] *The Ego and the Id* (1923), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.34.

> . . . we cannot fail to be struck by the similarity between the process of civilisation and the libidinal development of the individual. In most cases this process coincides with that of the ***sublimation*** (of instinctual aims) with which we are familiar. . . . Sublimation of instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilised life.[63]

The transition from the mother-figure to the acceptance of the "Law of the Father," as the symbolic instigator and perpetuator of social mores, is highlighted in *Der Butt* by the chapter headings of the first two months. "Die dritte Brust" (Bu.7) signifies the initial stage of total dependence on the aspects of warmth, nourishment and security, incarnate in the maternal figure. Whereas the heading "Wie wir städtisch wurden" (Bu.111), heralds the final relinquishment of maternal influence and the establishment of the patriarchal order. The implication being that all that is characteristic of the matriarchy is primal, basic and instinctual, whilst patriarchy is marked by organisation, planning and the establishment of social institutions.

Grass further demonstrates his use of the Freudian concept of the male infant's development from an organic entity (the id), to an individual with a social conscience (the acquisition of the super-ego), by employing the figure of a man in place of an infant. The narrator-projection, through a series of reincarnations in successive periods, gradually throws off the shackles of his maternal fixation (the Oedipus complex). The mother figure, too, is expanded to incorporate the concept of a matriarchal civilisation, the leader of which, Aua, is representative of the "Symbolic Mother." Similarly the father-figure can be seen as none other than the flounder himself, a mythical character who assumes the role of the "Symbolic Father." Thus the battle for "parental" domination over the narrator-projection assumes the form of a battle between two mythical characters; the "Symbolic Mother" versus the "Symbolic Father"; matriarchy versus patriarchy. This battle ultimately marks the conflict within the boy at the Oedipal stage of development. He must come to reject the mother-figure in favour of paternal identification, if he is to acquire his cultural heritage, in the form of the patriarchy.

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[63] *S.E.* VOL XXI, p.97.

The narrator-projection's pre-Oedipal phase is characterised in *Der Butt* by his dependence on the breast. Freud comments that:

> At a time when the first beginnings of sexual satisfaction are still linked with the taking of nourishment, the sexual instinct has a sexual object outside the infant's own body, in the shape of his mother's breast.[64]

This dependence is exaggerated by Grass with the portrayal of the "Ur-Super-Nährmutter" (Bu.9), Aua, as a three-breasted goddess. The emphasis falls on the enticement of the three breasts as an abundant source of nourishment, and as the essence of the maternal seduction of the child. The breasts are often described as if they were somehow detached from the figure of Aua, which, it could be contended, dehumanizes the attributes of womanhood:

> . . . drei Brüste sind mehr, oder sehen nach mehr, immer mehr aus, bedeuten-Überfluß, künden Verschwendung an, versichern auf ewig Sättigung, sind aber, genau besehen, abnorm- doch immerhin denkbar. (Bu.9)

The men of the horde are lulled by continual suckling by the three-breasted women, from birth right through to old-age, and so are kept in a state of infantile passivity. Both the infant described by Freud in his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" and the narrator-projection in the first two chapters of *Der Butt* rely heavily on the breast of the mother-figure, which they experience virtually as an extention of their own body, for it offers them the continual satisfaction of their basis needs. In accordance with Freud's theory put forward in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,*[65] it is shown that this stage of development is characterised by the fulfilment of the narrator-projection's most basic impulses; those for warmth, nourishment and security. Freud comments that:

> We know that the pleasure principle is proper to a primary method of working on the part of the mental apparatus.[66]

This "primary" mental function, though, is not only highlighted as a characteristic of the men within the horde, but is, more importantly, applied to the women whose lives revolve around the satisfaction of such basic impulses; whether it be in terms of affording satisfaction of the men's needs for warmth and nourishment, or the fulfilment of their own basic sexual urges, as

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[64] "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905), *S.E.* Vol XII, p.222.
[65] *S.E.* Vol XX.
[66] *ibid.* p.4.

manifest in various primitive matriarchal rituals. The whole matriarchal system is primitive in nature, being no more mentally progressive than Freud's infant at this stage. And whereas the men gradually come to develop an awareness of cultural, social and moral values, the women are shown to be unprogressive in every aspect except that of producing food. For they are shown to progress merely in the field of agriculture. And this is, of course, nothing less than a reaffirmation of women's eternal role of cook; the supplier of sustenance as a wife and mother.

The narrator-projection twice describes himself in terms of an infant in this initial stage of development, as elucidated by Freud. On both occasions the stress is laid on the fact that the men are kept in a state of infancy by the caring of the women. The implication of such phraseology is that it is against their own volition that they are maintained for so long in a state of mental and social stagnation, because they were kept "kindlich" by "Aua und Wigga mit ihrer Fürundfürsorge" (Bu.15). In retrospect, the narrator considers himself as a "dumpfer, durch totale Weiberfürsorge kindlich gehaltener Mann" (Bu.27). The suggestion is undoubtedly that maternal dependence, in the form of the matriarchal system, is to blame for such an unprogressive state of affairs.

It is only with the catching of the flounder, the "Symbolic Father," that the men of the horde (as embodied in the sole figure of the narrator-projection), gradually mature from this state of total infantile dependence on the mother-figure. They progress to a phase which can be likened to the Freudian concept of the phallic phase, of which he states that:

> The driving force which this male portion of the body will develop later at puberty expresses itself at this period of life mainly as an urge to investigate, as sexual curiosity. Many of the acts of exhibitionism and aggression which children commit and which in later years would be judged without hesitation to be expressions of lust, prove in analysis to be experiments undertaken in the service of sexual research.[67]

The transition from the pre-genital phase of total infantile dependence on the mother to this genital organisation, in which the potential of the phallus is recognised, occurs due to the intrusion of reality into the narrator's utopian world. Freud states that the initial (oral)

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[67] "The Infantile Genital Organization (An Interpolation into the Theory of Sexuality)," *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.143.

stage of development is shortlived, as the occasional loss of the breast brings with it the realisation that reality is not always compliant with the fulfilment of the child's sexual urges:

> The early efflorescence of infantile sexual life is doomed to extinction because its wishes are incompatible with reality and the inadequate stage of development which the child has reached.[68]

Thus the transition from the oral to the phallic phase of development is marked by deprivation and loss. It is noticeable, though, that the cause of the withdrawal of the breast from the narrator-projection lies in the promptings of the flounder. For it is he who urges the narrator-projection, Edek, to step out of the state of pure physical pleasure, as epitomised by the satisfaction gained from breast-feeding,[69] and enter into reality. On his advice alone, Edek begins to explore his region and learns also how to smelt metal, thus giving fire "einen fortschrittlichen, scheidenden, entscheidenden, einen männlichen Sinn" (Bu.29). It is essentially this progress from ignorance to a recognition of masculine potential, as epitomised by the men's use of fire, which Freud termed the "phallic stage." He described this phase as being marked by an awareness, in infants of both sexes, of the potency of the male phallus:

> The main characteristic of this infantile genital organisation . . . consists in the fact that for both sexes, only one genital, namely the male one, comes into account. What is present, therefore, is not a primacy of the genitals, but a primacy of the phallus.[70]

Grass portrays both the primacy of the phallus and the sexual curiosity inherant in this stage of development, through his concentration on phallic symbolism. The narrator-projection, in his incestuous desire for the mother-figure and his curiosity to discover the meaning of "Vaterrecht," of which the flounder has often spoken "als komme es immer und nur auf Vaterschaft an" (Bu.62), begins to fashion phallic objects. These he places in sight of the women in order that he might observe the effects these objects may have upon them. Not only does he create a life-size model of a man with three penes, but he also constructs a giant

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[68] *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. (1920), *S.E.* Vol XVIII, p.14.

[69] Freud comments that: "No one who has seen a baby sinking back satiated from the breast and falling asleep with flushed cheeks and a blissful smile, can escape the reflection that this picture persists as a prototype of the expression of sexual satisfaction in later life," in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," (1905), *S.E.* Vol VII, p.182.

[70] "The Infantile Genital Organisation" (1923), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.142.

replica of an elk bull's penis which the women decorate and suggestively leap over. The implication of these episodes is that the narrator-projection, due to his own Oedipal desires, attempts to satisfy the desires of the mother-figure for a phallus. He, as the "Symbolic Son," could be understood as trying to fulfil the two eternal wishes of the "Symbolic Mother," relating to the penis-child equation. Freud comments that:

> The two wishes - to possess a penis and a child remain strongly cathected in the unconscious and help prepare the female creature for her later sexual role.[71]

The suggestion is that, in equating the two concepts of penis and child so closely, the mother-figure has a natural propensity to commit incest with her own son, whom she acknowledges as the fulfilment of her deep-seated desire to possess the phallus. Grass exaggerates this tendency in women by depicting the whole matriarchal horde as incestuous, and highlighting their debauched nature when faced with the giant phallus:

> Schon übte sich neuer Kult spielerisch ein: die Weiber zielten mit Ringen, geflochten aus Weidenzweigen. Bald schmückten Sumpfblumenkränze das Gestöβ. Gespreizt drüberspringen wurde zum Weibersport. (Wie vulgär sie kreischten. Wie ordinär ihre Witze schon damals. Wieviel Spaβ ihnen mein biβchen Kunstfertigkeit machte.) (Bu.100/1)

It is the intervention of the flounder, the "Symbolic Father," which now succeeds in smashing the incestuous union between mother and son. It is through him that the narrator-projection comes to renounce his Oedipal desires and accepts the constraints of social morality. The "Symbolic Father" acts as the basis of civilised society, in that he incorporates the moral and social laws which both institute and constitute society. In him is to be found the foundations of cultural identity and linguistic development, which is symbolic and definitional, respectively, of civilised human societies. As Jacques Lacan says of the "Symbolic Father":

> The "Symbolic Father" is distinguished from the Imaginary Father[72] (often . .

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[71] "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (1924), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.179.

[72] Alan Sheridan comments, as follows, on Lacan's terminology: "'Imaginaire, symbolique, réel,' of these three terms, the 'imaginary' . . . was then the world, the register, the dimension of images, conscious or unconscious, perceived or imagined. . . . The notion of the 'symbolic' came to the forefront in the Rome Report [1953].The symbols referred to here are not icons, stylized figurations, but signifiers, in the sense developed by Saussure and Jakobson, extended into a generalized definition, in themselves without meaning, which acquire value only in

> . surprisingly distant from the real father) to whom is related the whole dialectic of aggressivity and identification. In all strictness the "Symbolic Father" is to be conceived as "transcendent," as an irreducible given of the signifier. The "Symbolic Father" - he who is ultimately capable of saying "I am who I am."[73]

The flounder, too, actually says of himself: "kein menschliches Gesetz ist mir angemessen" (Bu.43), thus sublimating himself to the level of an indefinable, yet all-pervasive entity. There is no one single law which is comparable to him, for all laws- be they linguistic, social, moral or aesthetic- are derived from his being. It is he, this "Symbolic Father," who embodies all the aspects of patriarchal society, such as morality, conscience, reason, art and social awareness; aspects so lacking in the depiction of the horde under the total dominance of the matriarchal goddess, Aua. Freud duly comments on the effects of the transition from mother to father-figure:

> . . . this turning from the mother to the father points in addition to a victory of intellectuality over sensuality- that is, an advance in civilisation, since maternity is proved by the evidence of the senses while paternity is a hypothesis, based on an inference and a premise. Taking sides in this way with a thought-process in preference to a sense perception has proved to be a monumentous step.[74]

The flounder exercises his paternal role by calling on the narrator-projection, Edek, to renounce the breast and thus wean himself away from his maternal dependence and incestuous desires, which stand as an obstacle to the development of civilised society, that is to say, patriarchal society: "Weg von der Brust. Ihr müßt euch endlich entwöhnen. Mein Sohn, du muβt dich endlich entwöhnen" (Bu.36). This emphatic call for a denunciation of the breast serves as a threat of castration on the part of the flounder. For Freud comments that it is, in part, the deprivation of the breast which foreshadows the threat of castration:

> It is my view that what brings about the destruction of the child's phallic

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[73](cont'd) their mutual relations. . . . Henceforth it is the symbolic, not the imaginary, that is seen to be the determinig order of the subject, and its effects are radical: the subject, in Lacan's sense is himself an effect of the symbolic." Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* A Selection translated from the French by Alan Sheridan. (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd, 1977), p. IX.

[73] Jacques Lacan, "The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis," Trans. Anthony Wilden. in *The Language of the Self, The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968), p.271.

[74] *Moses and Monotheism. S.E.* Vol XXIII, p.114.

> genital organisation is the threat of castration. . . . Psychoanalysis has recently attached importance to two experiences which all children must go through and which, it is suggested, prepare them for the loss of a highly valued part of their body. These experiences are the withdrawal of the mother's breast - at first intermittantly and later for good - and the daily demand on them to give up the contents of their bowel.[75]

It is also noted that masturbation usually precedes the threat of castration. For the auto-erotic stimulation of the genitals in the boy is merely a substitute for the desired incestuous union with the mother. In this respect Freud comments that: "It is to be assumed that this masturbation is attached to the Oedipus complex and serves as a discharge for the sexual excitation belonging to it."[76] Whilst masturbation is not mentioned explicitly in *Der Butt*, an analogy can be drawn between the men's chewing on the "Wunschrunkel" (Bu.72) and masturbation. For both denote the desired union with the "Symbolic Mother." Again, both the root (as a metaphor for masturbation), and masturbation itself fulfil the need, be it mental or physical, for a temporary substitute for desires which are unrealisable under Wigga's rule. Masturbation is a form of escapism, in that the physical release of tension eases the psychological oppression caused by the desires. Momentarily the individual is transported into a world of dream fulfilment, in which the oppression of reality is temporarily alleviated. In this transient state all anxieties briefly disappear as he dreams of the union with the "Symbolic Mother," as signified by the narrator-projection's mention of the third breast:

> Doch als Wigga in mehreren Groβaktionen die sogenannte Traumrunkel, eine Vielzweckwurzel besonderer Art, wie einen Volksschädling ausrotten lieβ und uns jenes Wunschkraut nahm, das während Jahrtausenden, als Pfriem gekaut, unsere Träume schöngefärbt, unsere Angste beschwichtigt und unsere Sehnsüchte eingelöst hatte, sahen wir nicht mehr wirklich, was uns Wunsch war.
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> So riβ der Film lebhafter Vorstellung. So verloren wir unsere Unschuld. Weg war die dritte Brust. Weil nicht mehr erträumt, auch nicht mehr greifbar. Ungestillt griffen wir fortan ins Leere. (Bu.72)

It can conceivably be argued that masturbation almost always has, as its goal, a sexual union. And with the explicit mention of the loss of the breast following so shortly after the expression of regret at the deprivation of their source of solace, the equation between the

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[75] "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," (1924), *S.E.* Vol XIX. p.175.
[76] "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinctions between the Sexes," *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.250.

"Traumrunkel," phallus and the "Symbolic Mother" becomes clearer. The nourishment, warmth and security offered by the breast, is highlighted by the narrator-projection's comments: "Wir sind satt, zufrieden, geborgen. Immer werden wir warm gehalten" (Bu.28). A closer analysis of the adjectives used attests that they are not only qualities offered by the breast, but also by the womb; as the foetus is enveloped in the mother's flesh. The womb thus being the ultimate source of protection and total union with the mother. It reveals a desire to return to a state of utter passivity, in which the embryo is engulfed in a sea of satisfaction, experiencing the repletion of its every basic need. Erich Neumann refers to this desire to return to a state of natal dormancy:

> Uroboric incest is a form of entry into the mother, of union with her, and it stands in sharp contrast to other and later forms of incest. In uroboric incest, the emphasis upon pleasure and love is in no sense active, it is more a desire to be dissolved and absorbed: passively one lets oneself be taken, sinks into the pleroma, melts away in the ocean of pleasure - a Liebestod.[77]

The narrator-projection, though, has, at this stage, reached what could be termed a genital phase, whereby he has come to realise that this desired union is now dependent on his successful fulfilment of the mother's aspirations to possess a phallus. Thus, the destruction of the root which denotes the phallus, heralds in the castration complex. For in denying the narrator-projection the "Wunschrunkel," he is effectively cut off/castrated from the power of the phallus to unite him (albeit psychologically) with the "Symbolic Mother."

It is to be noted that Freud locates the ultimate threat of castration in the "Symbolic Father," whereas Grass seems to place the threat in the hands of the women, laying emphasis on their ability to strike fear into men through their vulgar rituals:

> Die Weiber durften als erste zubeißen, von der Spitze weg. . . . Und wie aus allem, das in seiner Form Vergleiche zuließ, machte Aua aus dem Wurzelbeißen einen Kult. Anzüglich hielten die Weiber, wenn Opfermond war, die Urrüben vor sich. Bevor sie krachend zubissen, stießen sie kurze, wütige Schreie aus, uns Edeks zur Warnung. Als Opfergaben füllten gebündelte Urwurzeln die bleichenden Schädel der Elchbullen. (Bu.75)

Inherant in the description of the roots and elk bull skulls, as Arno Schmidt would see it, is the

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[77] Erich Neumann, *The Origins of Consciousness* Trans. by R. F. Hull. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), p.17.

implication of the male genitals, whilst the tribal "Rübenbeißen" can be none other than a threat to the male phallus. Despite the fact that the ritual is conducted by women, the object of worship must either be Aua herself, or the Wolfgod: "Sie [Aua] duldete nichts außer sich. Der alte Wolfsgott, dem sie das Feuer gestohlen hatte, beanspruchte schon Nebenkult genug" (Bu.76). Whilst for the men of the tribe, the god to whom the castration ritual is obviously dedicated is none other than the flounder, the "Symbolic Father": "Und im Untergrund - so munkelte man - versuchten die Edeks, sich einen Fischgott zu nennen" (Bu.76). It is to be noted that Freud, in his book *Totem and Taboo*, states that "at bottom God is nothing more than an exalted father,"[78] and that "with the introduction of the father-deities a fatherless society gradually changed into one organized on a patriarchal basis."[79] Thus, despite the fact that women may explicitly threaten castration, the underlying implication is that the actual agent of castration would be the "Symbolic Father," as punishment for the incestuous desires inherant in the boy's masturbatory activities. Freud, on this subject, states that:

> When the child's interest turns to his genitals he betrays the fact by manipulating them frequently: and he then finds that the adults don't approve of his behaviour. More or less plainly, more or less brutally, a threat is pronounced that this part of him which he values so highly will be taken away from him. Usually it is from the women that this threat emanates: very often seeking to strengthen their authority by a reference to the father or the doctor, who, so they say, will carry out the punishment.[80]

Further to this, in his essay entitled "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,"[81] Freud comments on the case of the "Wolfman," whose Oedipal desires were directed at his nurse. Despite the fact that castration was severely threatened by the nurse, the child feared the father, and not the woman, as the actual agent of castration:

> Although the threats or hints of castration which had come his way had emanated from women, this could not hold up the final result for long. In spite of everything it was his father from whom in the end he came to fear castration. In this respect heredity triumphed over the accidental experience: in man's prehistory it was undoubtedly the father who practised castration as

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[78] *Totem and Taboo* (1912-1913), *S.E.* Vol XIII, p.147,
[79] *ibid.* p.149.
[80] "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," (1924), *S.E.* Vol XIX. p.174.
[81] "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis ('The Wolfman')," (1918), *S.E.* Vol XVII.

a punishment.[12]

We turn again to the role of the "Symbolic Father," for it is to symbolic castration that the narrator-projection should submit himself, thus sublimating his incestuous desires and recognising his paternal heritage. For through the acceptance of symbolic castration and with it the renunciation of his Oedipal desires, the narrator-projection comes to realise his own, though as yet weak, powers inherant in his possession of the phallus. He then acknowledges that he, too, will one day come to assume the power and position of father. Freud's psychoanalytical study "A Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy,"[13] identifies this process of the sublimation of Oedipal desires through an identification with the father-figure:

> With Hans' last phantasy the anxiety which arose from his castration complex was also overcome, and his painful expectations were given a happier turn. Yes, the Doctor [Hans' mother had threatened that he would be the agent of castration to stop Hans' masturbation] did come, he did take away his penis- but only to give him a bigger one in exchange for it.[14]

What both little Hans and the narrator-projection come to acknowledge is their power as possessors of the phallus. For the moment, however, they must acknowledge the power of the father to possess the mother sexually. Thus the child, whilst recognising his potential, is cut off from the mother; symbolically castrated. In *Der Butt*, the realisation of the power of the father is brought about by the fact that the flounder lies with Aua. The subsequent loss of the breast, resulting from this incident, could be seen as indicative of the narrator's detachment from his close maternal bond:

> Und dann fiel die dritte Brust ab . . . weil der Butt uns Edeks Gott sein wollte.
>
> . . . Und irgendwann ließ sich eine der immer noch dreibrüstigen Aua-priesterinnen darauf ein, von uns Männern mit Bittgesuchen bedrängt: sie legte sich mit dem Butt ins Schilf oder auf Laub oder auf ein ausgehandeltes Laub-Schilf-Lager und kam tagsdrauf zurück: ohne mittlere Brust. (Bu.71/2)

It is this loss which virtually signifies the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. For, because the flounder has sexually possessed Aua, the narrator-projection must renounce his own desire for sexual union with this "Symbolic Mother." The final abandonment of this mother fixation is

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[12] *ibid.* p.86.
[13] "Analysis of a Five-Year-Old-Boy ('Little Hans')," (1909), *S.E.* Vol X.
[14] *ibid.*

highlighted in *Der Butt* by the narrator-projection's betrayal of Mestwina to the representatives of the patriarchal order. Thus the abandonment of matriarchy and all that it lacks, in favour of the cultured and civilised aspects of patriarchy.

"The Law of the Father" is thus established with the threat of castration, which Freud notes to be "of the profoundest importance in the formation alike of character and of neurosis."[85] For now the barriers against incest have been erected and with them has come the acquisition of a set of moral and social values. Thus it is the acquisition of a super-ego through the "Law of the Father" that makes the narrator-projection heir to the cultural achievements of mankind. The super-ego is characterised by a heightened awareness of the self and of one's moral and social responsibilities. This is achieved through an identification with, and an internalisation of the "Symbolic Father" and all that he represents. The narrator-projection in *Der Butt* illustrates this dawning of awareness:

> So von ihm [dem Butt] angesprochen, fühle ich mich. Mir kam Bedeutung zu. Dieses Übersichhinauswachsen. Dieses Sichbewußtwerden. Schon nahm ich mich wichtig. (Bu.28)

It is from the flounder that the narrator-projection has gained the strength to surmount the Oedipus complex and adopt the cultural, moral and social requirements on which patriarchal society is based. Freud comments at length in *The Ego and the Id* on the role of this "Symbolic Father" concerning his importance for the perpetuation of a cultured civilisation:

> The ego-ideal [ie. the "Symbolic Father"; the "ideal image" to whose place the boy aspires] had the task of repressing the Oedipus complex, indeed, it is to that revolutionary event that it owes its existence. Clearly the repression of the Oedipus complex was no easy task. The child's parents, and especially his father, were perceived as the obstacle to a realisation of his Oedipal wishes; so his infantile ego fortified itself for the carrying out of the repression by erecting this same obstacle within itself. It borrowed strength to do this, so to speak, from the father, and this loan was an extraordinarily monumentous act. The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was, and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego later on - in the form of conscience or perhaps an unconscious sense of guilt. . . . Owing to the way in which the ego ideal is formed, it has the most abundant links with the phylogenetic acquisition of each individual - his archaic heritage. . . . It is easy to show that the ego ideal answers to

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[85] "An Autobiographical Study," (1925), *S.E.* Vol XX, p.37.

everything that is expected of the higher nature of man."[46]

This blatant anti-feminist statement that all aspects of the elevated mind stem from the "Symbolic Father," is also depicted within the novel. For it is the flounder who, in his capacity as the father-figure, teaches the narrator-projection all the various aspects of culture:

> Der Butt gab Auskunft. Von Anfang an belehrend, mit allwissender Überlegenheit und deshalb, trotz seiner kategorischen Punktumsätze, geschwätzig näselnd, professoral, wie von der Kanzel herab abkanzelnd oder penetrant väterlich. . . (Bu.26)

The flounder even refers to the narrator-projection as "mein Sohn" (Bu.26), and "Bürschchen" (Bu.48). In his paternal, "pedagogical" role, he instructs his pupil as to the nature of art by giving him Minoan artefacts. And it is as a direct result of the flounder's influence that the narrator-projection begins to form an aesthetic appreciation for art.

It is also as a result of his explorations, at the behest of the flounder, that the narrator-projection discovers his ability to create music. This has its seeds in the frightened whistlings of the men, which culminate in the expression of song (cf.Bu.64/5). The powers of logic and calculation are also transmitted to the narrator-projection through the flounder, who heralds this ability to count as the seeds of masculine domination:

> . . . die Stunde der Algebra hat geschlagen. Fortan wird gezählt werden. Und wer zählt, wird bald rechnen. Und wer rechnet, berechnet voraus. (Bu.32)

But for virtually every positive statement concerning the acquisition of these abilities by the narrator-projection, there is a derisory comment with regard to the unprogressive nature of the matriarchy:

> Das konnte Aua nicht, Zeichen setzen, ein Bildnis machen. (Bu.25)
>
> Jede Rechnung darüber hinaus [above 111, because Aua did not have more than 111 dimples] sei unnatürlich und deshalb gegen die praktische Vernunft gerichtet. (Bu.33)

Even from such statements it can be deduced that women are depicted as lacking in aesthetic expression and the ability to reason logically. They are portrayed as being driven merely by instinctual impulses, whereas the men are shown to renounce these impulses, to a greater

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[46] *The Ego and the Id, S.E.* Vol XIX, p.34.

extent, through the acquisition of the super-ego; a factor which leads them to found a cultured civilisation. Women in *Der Butt* seem merely to "acquire" these cultural attributes, as Freud comments, "by cross-inheritance." Eva Figes in her book entitled *Patriarchal Attitudes* totally repudiates the anti-feminist implications of the concept of the formation of the super-ego:

> The idea of the male super-ego is authoritarian, punitive and repressive. It is fallacious if only because no civilisation could make any progress through a body of males who had learned to conform to their elders' values through fear of castration. Progress depends on the adventure, the original mind has to break away from the values of the previous generation. By saying that man gave up his instinctual demands and women did not, Freud was in fact over-simplifying the nature of those demands.[17]

Both Freud and Grass effectively nullify any positive influence women may have in the foundation and perpetuation of society. In both cases, social progression is only seen to be achieved through the negation of feminine domination; be it in the form of maternal dependence or matriarchy, the latter being most clearly depicted by Grass. In either case, the anti-feminist tendencies become apparent, due to the denial of female efficacy within the political sphere.

But it is not only with regard to the realm of political activity that such anti-feminist tendencies are to be discerned. For in his various lectures and case studies concerning feminine sexuality and the psychological consequences thereof, Freud effectively reaffirms the "traditional male attitude that women, by the very nature of their sex, are inferior. And by means of an analysis of certain female characters in *Der Butt*, it will be demonstrated that the underlying reason for their "unnatural" behaviour lies in their acute sense of inferiority, which Freud descibes as a narcissistic "wound" caused by the realisation and subsequent overwhelming desire to possess the power of the phallus.

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[17] Eva Figes, *Patriarchal Attitudes* (London: Faber & Faber, 1970), pp.46-47.

3. The Phallo-centric Undertones of Feminine Sexuality

3.1 The Seeds of Envy

Freud's research into feminine sexuality lays great emphasis on the sexual transition a girl must undergo in order to attain "true" femininity. The process described by Freud, however, whether successfully concluded by the girl or not, fundamentally implies that she is inferior in relation to men. For the woman must either accept the passive, feminine role, and with it the limitations of her sex, or resign herself to an unrealisable desire to possess the phallus. In either situation, it is the concept of the primacy of the phallus which is noted as the dominant feature in a woman's life. She must either submit to its power, or remain ever envious of men as possessors of the phallus.

It is these anti-feminist tendencies, concerning Freud's psycho-sexual evaluation of women, and Grass' subsequent interpretation of the relationship existing between men and women, which will form the core of this chapter. The main argument centers on Freud's theory, and Grass' depiction of women's presumed subconscious desire to possess a penis. Without it, Freud concludes, they can never hope to attain the status and power of men: power which is inherant in the symbol of the phallus.

In his essay entitled "Some Psychical Consequences of the Distinction between the Sexes,"[88] Freud traces the origins of "penis-envy" in women to the initial realisation that the penis is the:

> Superior counterpart of their own small and inconspicuous organ, and from that time forward [they] fall a victim to envy for the penis. . . . [The girl] makes her judgement and her decision in a flash. She has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it.[89]

Thus, according to Freud, it is this keenly felt sense of deficiency which he terms the female "castration complex"; the recognition that "the only bodily organ which is really regarded as inferior is the atrophied penis, a girl's clitoris."[90]

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[88] *S.E.* Vol XIX.
[89] *ibid.* p.252.
[90] "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis: XXXI The Dissection of the

This psychological formation of penis-envy is extremely cleverly portrayed in *Der Butt*. For Grass uses, as the basis of this initial stage, a Greek myth which is traditionally patriarchal in nature, namely that of the god Prometheus who stole fire from the gods by concealing it in a hollow stick. The myth relates how he subsequently gave man the power of fire; a crime for which he himself was severely punished by being chained to a rock with a vulture plucking eternally at his liver. Grass again inverts this myth, in part, for it is the goddess Aua who acquires fire for mankind. This statement may seem superficially feminist in nature, but anti-feminist tendencies become apparent when one looks at this episode in greater depth. For Aua, the archetypal mother and therefore symbolic of all women, is effectively punished for her theft by being burned. It is this "Jucknarbe" which will be shown to be representative of women's eternal envy for the phallus. And it is through a combination of the Freudian psychoanalytical appraisal of the myth of the acquisition of fire and his theories of feminine infantile development that this analogy shall become apparent.

In Freud's analysis, the acquisition and control of fire centres around the struggle for power between two phallic symbols. The one is represented by the fire itself, of which Freud states that:

> The warmth that is radiated by fire calls up the same sensation that accompanies the state of sexual excitation, and the shape and movement of a flame suggests a phallus in activity. There can be no doubt about the mythological significance of flame as a phallus.[91]

The other phallic symbol is represented by the mythical hollow fennel stick, in which Prometheus apparently concealed the fire. By a procedure of inversion, that of acknowledging the opposite of episodes and symbols, as in dream analysis, it is thus possible, according to Freud, to uncover the hidden significance of this hollow stick. He concludes that "what man harbours in his penis-tube, is not fire. On the contrary, it is the means of *quenching* fire."[92] And he further comments, by way of an explanation:

> One of the presuppositions on which we based our account of the myth of the

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[90](cont'd) Personality," (1933), *S.E.* Vol XXII, p.65.
[91] "The Acquisition and Control of Fire," (1932), *S.E.* Vol XXII, p.190.
[92] *ibid*. p.188.

> acquisition of fire was, indeed, that to primal man the attempt to quench fire had the meaning of a pleasurable struggle with another phallus.[93]

It is this basic idea of a "struggle with another phallus," which Grass uses in his own mythical depiction of the acquisition of fire. In *Der Butt*, however, this struggle assumes universal significance, for it represents the battle between the sexes. In psycho-sexual terms this struggle is symbolic of the woman's attempt to recognise her genitals as analoguous, if not superior, to the male phallus.

It could, perhaps, be argued that Grass uses the Greek myth as a basis for the initial battleground between the sexes, whilst simultaneously employing much of Freud's theories concerning feminine sexuality, in order to highlight the inferior status of women. For Aua is ultimately defeated by the essentially masculine fire, in that she is left eternally scared and thus forever envious of the male phallus.

Grass replaces the mythical figure of Prometheus by the mythical goddess Aua who can be considered as the archetypal mother and who is, therefore symbolic of all women throughout the ages. This is made clear with the quotation: "Und auch Ilsebill war von Anfang an da" (Bu.7). The fact that, by means of her "Tasche" (Bu.55), Aua, a woman, intends to steal fire (which is symbolically masculine in nature) from the male Wolfgod, highlights the universal nature of the theft. For it denotes the initial psychological battle between feminine and masculine.

Aua steals this primal fire by concealing three coals in her vagina, which could perhaps be taken as an analogy to Prometheus' hollow fennel stick. Continuing along this line of argument, her symbolic quenching of the remaining fire could be understood, in Freudian terms, as "a pleasurable struggle with another phallus." The pleasure taken in overcoming the power of the phallus through her feminine attributes, can be seen in Aua's uncontrollable laughter; an aspect which is energetically stressed by Grass:

> Da lachte die Frau, denn noch brannte die glühende Holz-Kohle nicht bis zum Schmerz, weil ihre Tasche immer noch feucht war. So sehr lachte sie, daß sie sich verklemmen mußte. (Bu.56)

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[93] *ibid.* p.190.

This initial feminine victory over the phallus is, however, shortlived. For in her envy to possess the phallic power of fire, Aua receives a burn. The scar left by the burn is, in physical terms, represented by the clitoris. But it is the symbolism of this "scar" which is important. For the "phallic" fire inflicts both a physical and mental scar upon women; the former being a constant reminder of the latter. The description given in *Der Butt*, whilst restricting itself to purely physical terms, has as its underlying meaning the significance of the scar in the mental attitude of all women. Thus the Wolfgod warns Aua:

> . . . das Urfeuer wird dort wo deine Tasche sich öffnet, ein Zeichen einbrennen. Das wird dir als Narbe bleiben. Die Narbe wird jucken und jucken. Und weil es juckt, wirst du dir wünschen, daß jemand kommt und das Jucken wegmacht. (Bu.56)

Freud himself uses the terminology "scar" and "wound" to express the psychological consequences of the girl's realisation that she is lacking a penis. The result, as he sees it, is an overwhelming sense of envy for the phallus; the existence of which acts as constant evidence of the girl's own deficiency. Freud comments in this respect that:

> The psychical consequences of envy for the penis . . . are various and far-reaching. After a woman has become aware of the wound to her narcissism, she develops, like a scar, a sense of inferiority.[94]

It is this sense of inferiority which is further illustrated in *Der Butt* by the practical uses to which fire is put. For women in the matriarchy use fire only for the purpose of cooking, thus reaffirming their inferior role as cooks; a role which is assigned to them throughout the ages. Thus the flounder comments accordingly: "Die Küche ist Herrschaft genug" (Bu.16). However, it is shown that men, as actual possessors of the phallus, have the ability to smelt metal and create that which is lasting and practical. Or, in the words of the flounder, they give fire "einen weiteren, ein fortschrittlichen, scheidenden, entscheidenden, einen männlichen Sinn" (Bu.26). Thus the seemingly simple episode concerning Aua's acquisition of fire could conceivably be argued as the initial phase of women's "penis-envy." A stage of feminine sexual development which Freud argues:

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[94] "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," (1925), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.253.

> will leave irradicable traces on their development and the formation of their character.[95]

For a woman, according to Freud, must acknowledge the fact of her "castration," that is to say her lack of a penis, and with it the natural inferiority of her role as a woman. It is this basic theory that is held to be anti-feminist in nature, for it effectively eradicates the possibility that women could ever assume, in any great number, a superior or equal role, simply due to the "condition" of their sex.

3.2 The Masculinity Complex

Freud's theories on feminine sexuality continue with the assertion that for a woman to attain "true" femininity she must subconsciously convert her desire for a penis into the desire for a man, as an extension of the penis, or a baby.[96] In doing so, she supposedly attains her true goal in life, as a wife and mother. This belittling of the role of women in society is highlighted in *Der Butt*, whereby all the female characters in the novel are a combination of cook, wife, mother or lover to the narrator-projecton. Thus the criticism thrown at Freud, namely that he is patronizing in the extreme in his attitude towards women, could perhaps apply, in part, to Grass' novel *Der Butt*. Juliet Mitchell comments on the feminist contention that Freud's theories perpetuate traditional male attitudes by demeaning women to a lesser role:

> The greater part of the feminist movement has identified Freud as the enemy. It is held that psychoanalysis claims women are inferior and that they can achieve femininity only as wives and mothers. Psychoanalysis is seen as a justification of the status quo, bourgeios and patriarchal, and Freud in his own person exemplifies these qualities.[97]

The path towards "true" femininity is, according to Freud, fraught with difficulty for the young woman, for it necessitates the renunciation of any masculine traits of development

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[95] "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis: XXXIII Femininity," (1933), *S.E.* Vol XXII, p.125.
[96] Cf. "On Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Eroticism," (1917), *S.E.* Vol XVII, p.132.
[97] Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. (London: Allen Lane, 1974), p.XV.

and the adoption of the passive/feminine attitude. This transition is marked by a cessation of masturbatory activities which are described by Freud in the following terms:

> Masturbation, at all events of the clitoris, is a masculine activity . . . the elimination of clitoridal sexuality is a necessary precondition for the development of femininity.[98]

What is meant by this is that the girl must forgo the pleasure of masturbation and recognise the vagina as the source of her femininity, in that it is the passive receptacle for the penis. Thus an equation is drawn between active/masculine[99] and passive/feminine. The results of the refusal to accept the passive/feminine role can be seen to be epitomised in the figure of Mäxchen. For she is caught up in what Freud termed the "masculinity complex."[100] This is understood as a refusal to "progress" from the essentially "masculine" activity to a realisation of her naturally passive, feminine role. The obstacle blocking this transition is, according to Freud, the anti-feminist notion of "penis-envy."

In *Der Butt* the description of Mäxchen climbing the pinetree is shot through with sexual inuendo, so much so that there can be little doubt that it is a reference to masturbation. The vocabulary used is fraught with sexual connotations, as Mäxchen reaches orgasm by means of "die phallische Kiefer":

> . . . auch halfen die Zurufe der Freunde Fränki und Siggi, deren rhythmischer Triebvers "Steht kerzengrade wie zur Parade" das Mäxchen nicht nur anfeuerte, sondern vorerst nur hintersinnig, doch kurz vorm knorrig gezausten Wipfel der phallischen Kiefer regelrecht Lust brachte, weshalb das himmelhoch verstiegene Mäxchen abermals eine Pause einlegen mußte: eng an den vibrierenden Stamm gegossen, bis es ihm ganz natürlich und geradezu weiblich kam: Achachachachach. . . . (Bu.480)

The fact that Fränki and Siggi condone and indeed encourage Mäxchen's actions, suggests that they, too, are in the habit of performing such practices.

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[98] "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," (1925), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.255.

[99] The fact that boys masturbate and use their hand in doing so, is, as Freud states, "already evidence of the important contribution which the instinct for mastery is destined to make to masculine activity." "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," (1905), *S.E.* Vol VII, p.223.

[100] "Some Psychical Consequences of the Distinction between the Sexes," (1925), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.253.

Mäxchen's masturbatory activities attest to the Freudian theory that those women who are not prepared to renounce their clitoral stimulation will remain bound to the "masculinity complex"; and due to their envy for the phallus, may to all intents and purposes adopt masculine modes of behaviour and dress. Freud comments that the girl may refuse to acknowledge her passive/feminine nature, and not accept the "fact" of her "castration":

> Thus a girl may refuse to accept the fact of being castrated, may harden herself in the conviction that she does possess a penis, and may subsequently be compelled to behave as though she were a man.[101]

The Freudian theory of the "masculinity complex" is amply illustrated in *Der Butt* when one considers the mode of both dress and behaviour of Mäxchen, Siggi and Fränki. Billy fits into a slightly different mould which shall be discussed later.

The very description of these three Lesbians further highlights their "masculine" nature. This is especially noticeable in the case of Fränki who appears to have adopted the role of the father-figure and who is repeatedly referred to by the use of masculine nouns and pronouns:

> Fränki, der Mann mit dem breiten Kreuz und den schmalen Hüften. (Bu.481)

> Zehn Schritt nahm Fränki Abstand, so daß er das Bäumchen ganz im Schußwinkel hatte. Er schoß Lachsalven gezielt und streuend. Er zog seine große zynische Lachnummer ab. (Nichts war ihm heilig.) (Bu.488)

They also adopt masculine modes of behaviour. The emphasis, however, is placed on the fact that it is the negative masculine traits which are most pronounced in the figures of these three Lesbians. Not only do they actually attend this Father's Day celebration, but they also fit into the mould of bawdy, beer-drinking men who congregate together as a celebration of their manhood. These men are described in terms of "bierselige Horden" (Bu.461), an aspect which the four women attempt to emulate: "Das taten sie: harte Schnäpse trinken und Bier aus der Flasche" (Bu.463). Also male aggressiveness is a feature of Fränki's behaviour when "he" makes use of force in order to obtain compliance from Mäxchen (cf.Bu.483).

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[101] *ibid.* p.252.

The basis, in Freudian terms, of their behaviour is understood as resultant of their subconscious envy for the phallus. This is exaggerated in the text by Grass' depiction of the episode in which, having obtained an artificial penis, Mäxchen urinates in the same fashion as men:

> . . . breitbeinig stehend als klassischer Mann begann das Mäxchen, an einem hellgeflammten Kiefernstamm sein Wasser abzuschlagen, indem es seinen Jeans den Schlitz zum Hosenstall öffnete und einen rosafarbenen Pimmel mit Griff wie gelernt in zielgerechte Lage brachte. (Bu.471)

Both Siggi and Fränki also use the artificial penis in order to mimic the male stance, and, in doing so, Fränki feels that "he" has finally achieved "his" dream and obtained a penis and all that the phallus symbolises:

> Wie ein Kerl stand Fränki, den Männerblick trübe in ferne Prärien verloren. Kein Neid auf die Stinkmorchel mehr. Nie wieder erniedrigendes Weibergestrull. (Bu.472)

The culmination of the "Vatertag" chapter for these Lesbians concerns the gang-rape of Sybille in their attempts to engender a son by her. It must be remembered that it is the notion of "Vaterrecht" that was so important in the initial establishment of the patriarchal order, and this gang-rape can, perhaps, thus be perceived as representative of a reenactment by the three Lesbians of the founding of this patriarchal order. The power of the phallus lies in its ability to inseminate, to engender; the realisation of which led to the acknowledgement by the narrator-projection of his masculine potential. Fränki, Siggi and Mäxchen, in their vain attempts to engender a son, are thus reenacting the primal subjugation of women through the realisaton of the power inherant in the phallus.

Sybille is the chosen victim, for she is physically the epitomy of femininity. This implication can be gleaned from the fact that she is large-breasted, which, in Grass' terms is a significant feature of traditional femininity. The description of her centres around this very aspect; for she is referred to by Fränki as "unsere allerliebste Dickmadame . . . weshalb ihr das Mäxchen auf Muttertag einen ausgewachsenen Tittenhalter geschenkt hat" (Bu.468). Further to this she is presented by the narrator as having the measurements of an all-American pin-up girl (cf.Bu.462), the implication being that she would be found attractive by all men. The fact that

the "masculine" Lesbians seek her company is, according to Freud, far from unusual. In his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," he states, referring to women:

> The active inverts exhibit masculine characteristics, both physical and mental, with peculiar frequency, and look for femininity in their sexual objects.[102]

Thus Sybille is typecast into the feminine role even amongst these Lesbians; for she is endowed with ample breasts and fulfils the role of cook and lover for her "masculine" counterparts. It is she who is the chosen victim for the rape, for it follows that, in her feminine role, she should passively accept penetration by the penis, albeit an artificial version. Throughout this Father's Day chapter, culminating in this rape scene, it is noticeable that Sybille is treated badly and frequently humiliated by the other Lesbians, precisely because of her natural femininity. Fränki refuses to allow her to use the artificial penis, referring to her in derisory terms as "Kindchen" (Bu.472).

The treatment of Sybille by her "friends" could conceivably be judged in terms of the universal disdain that men, according to Freud, have for women. This is due to the realisation that they, men, must naturally be superior, due to the fact that women do not possess the power of the phallus - hence the subjugation of women by men. This situation can perhaps be seen to be mirrored in the relationship of Sybille to her "masculine" friends. For in their capacity as men they, too, display scorn towards the "inferior, feminine" Sybille. Freud comments that this attitude is common amongst "masculine" Lesbians who actually regard themselves as equivalent to men and thus display disdain towards those women who accept their condition as "castrated" individuals. In his analysis of female sexuality, Freud explains the seeds of this attitude in a girl's discovery and disavowel of her "castrated" condition:

> When she has passed beyond her first attempt at explaining her lack of a penis as being a punishment personal to herself and has realised that that characteristic is a universal one, she begins to share the contempt felt by men for a sex which is the lesser in so important a respect, and, at least in holding that opinion, insists on being like a man.[103]

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[102] *S.E.* Vol VII, p.145.
[103] "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," (1925), *S.E.*, Vol XIX, p.253

Thus the Freudian conception of women's "penis-envy," if it cannot be successfully surmounted (that is to say if the woman cannot accept her naturally passive, feminine role), will lead to the "masculinity complex." This, by its very masculine bias, naturally includes disdain for those women who submit to their preconditioned feminine role; accepting their inferior position. This theory is forcefully represented in *Der Butt*, initially by the episode in which Aua acquires fire, but in a more exaggerated context in the "Vatertag" chapter. Both the "masculinity complex" and the subsequent contempt for "castrated" women are depicted in the portrayal of Fränki, Siggi and Mäxchen. The rape acts as a representation of the eternal subjugation of the feminine by the masculine. The irony underlying the whole episode adds weight to this extreme anti-feminist tendency; for the Lesbians believe themselves to have attained true manhood through their possession of an artificial penis. Once again, as in Aua's vain attempt to acquire and maintain the phallic power of fire, women are portrayed as continually striving for an unobtainable entity. They are shown to be inferior merely due to the very nature of their sex; an inferiority which they can only partially overcome by the use of artificial substitutes, which, in themselves, contain no power. The narrator comments on the irony surrounding the Lesbians' attempts to emmulate masculinity:

> O dumme Unterlassung der Natur! Nun muβt das Mäxchen sich doch mit dem Kunststoff gürten, nachdem des ersten zeugungswütigen Vaters Hosen gefallen waren und das Nichts offenbar wurde. Jaja, es war alles griffbereit. Gleitsalbe auch. Das unterscheidet den Mensch vom Tier: daβ ihm zu allem, was ist oder fehlt, Ersatz einfällt. Wir wissen uns schon zu helfen! (Bu.495)

Thus the anti-feminist notion of "penis-envy" is shown to have dire consequences in women, should they revolt against their "natural" role. The results of which can be seen to be manifest in the sexual aberrations of women, as described by Freud.

The character of Dorothea von Monthau acts as a further illustration of this subconscious desire for a phallus. In her case, as will be seen, this psychological desire becomes converted into a physical need, expressed in the manifestation of her masochistic sexual aberration.

3.3 "Feminine" Masochism and Frigidity

The actions of Dorothea von Montau and the hordes of "zuckende Büßerinnen" (Bu.121) described in *Der Butt* can also be defined in psychoanalytical terms. For Freudian analysis traces "feminine" masochism back to the theory of penis envy. Once again it is women's "organ inferiority" which is understood as the root cause of the masochistic neurosis, most skillfully depicted by Grass in the figure of Dorothea von Monthau.

In his essay, entitled "Femininity,"[104] Freud argues that it is the inhibitions, both mental and social, against the active libidinal desires focussed in the clitoris, which causes masochism in women. For the redirection inwards of these erotic and active/aggressive tendencies results in powerful masochistic impulses, whereby:

> Satisfaction is conditional upon suffering physical or mental pain at the hands of the sexual object.[105]

It is this element, of suffering both physical and mental pain, which is so forcefully portrayed in the character of Dorothea. The moving description of her by the narrator-projection highlights the force of these masochistic impulses, which, though the pain is selfinflicted, arise in the name of the love object, Jesus:

> Auch daß mir das Kind . . . eine siebenkettige Geißel mit Silbergriff, in den Perlmutt und zu Tränen geschliffener Bernstein eingelegt waren, wie ein Spielzeug abschwatzte . . , rührte mich eher; denn wie hätte ich ahnen können, daß sich Dorothea nächtens durchs Büßerhemd bis aufs Blut geißelte. (Bu.121)

The notion that these masochistic sufferings shall, as Freud stated, "emanate from the loved person and shall be endured at his command,"[106] is directly related, in Freud's theory of "feminine" masochism, to the woman's phantasy of being castrated/raped by the father and of bearing his child. Thus, the basis of "feminine" masochism rests on the fact that the woman is the passive object of castration (i,e. pain), copulation and childbirth.[107]

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[104] "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis," (1933), *S.E.* Vol XXII.
[105] "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," (1905), *S.E.* Vol VII, p.158.
[106] "The Economic Problem of Masochism," (1924), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.165.
[107] Cf. *ibid.* p.162.

In order to evaluate the significance of this theory in the interpretation of *Der Butt*, it will be necessary to proceed step by step, tracing all analogies between Freud's theory and Grass' artistic depiction.

Firstly, as has already been stated, "feminine" masochism is presumed by Freud to arise from the internal and external demands placed on the girl to renounce her essentially masculine libidinal activities. The effect of this could be understood as the internalisation of this masculine aggression resulting in the desire to be the passive, "feminine" object rather than the aggressor. The wish for a penis is still, however, uppermost in the girl's mind, and, according to Freud, it is with this thought that her love object becomes a "paternal object."[108] For she now expects her father to satisfy her desires for a penis, and in her phantasies she is raped by him and bears his child. Thus, the equation of penis - child, which was mentioned earlier, is expanded to include the father-figure: penis - father - child.

Masochism is thus classified by Freud as "a union between destructiveness and sexuality."[109] The connection between destructiveness (but here what is meant is the passive acceptance of pain), and sexuality (the desire for sexual union with the father), can be located within the character of Dorothea. For the person, for whom she undergoes such pain, is initially Jesus. He is a father-figure par excellence, of whom she speaks in terms of endearment. However, the sexual implications of her words cannot be ignored. For her verses betray the link between her selfdestructiveness and sexuality; pain being thus endured at the bidding of this love-object/father-figure:

> Jesuliep min geisslin für, das min leip sich smerz erkür. (Bu.121)
>
> Wenn fidelt er min saitinspil, Liepjesu pringt mir frewden vil . . . (Bu.136)

This latent desire for sexual union with Jesus is recognised by the narrator-projection, namely Dorothea's husband Albrecht Schlichting, for, when speaking of her, he comments that she: "gesund obendrein, so zart, ja, zerbrechlich . . . ihre Gesichte und himmlischen

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[108] "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis: XXXII Femininity," (1933), *S.E.* Vol XXII, p119.
[109] *Civilisation and its Discontents*, (1930), *S.E.* Vol XXI, p.119.

Begattungen erlebt" (Bu.135). The phrase "himmlische Begattung" is suggestive of more than a merely spiritual union, but the precondition of sexual satisfaction depends on the fulfilment of her masochistic tendencies. These are amply depicted in Dorothea's self-flagellation, her wearing of a "Nesselkleid" (Bu.138), her long pilgrimage, and subsequent immurement for the sake of the love-object, Jesus, of whom she says: "Din sper jesuherz macht wunniklich smerz" (Bu.167).

Dorothea's submission to the flounder, by way of a closer union with "ihrem himmlischen Bräutigam" (Bu.138), is yet another example of the masochistic phantasy of sexual union with this love-object; the father-figure. She states that "wenn sie ihn küsse, den Butt, werde sie nicht ihn, sondern in seiner Gestalt ihren Liepjesu küssen" (Bu.139). A section of the aforementioned equation- penis - father - child- is thus shown to be illustrated in this case. For Dorothea desires the love-object, Jesus/the flounder, merely because he would fulfil her desire to possess a phallus. The fact that her first meeting with the flounder does not sate this desire, is revealed in her rebuke: "Vun Kusen hat min sel genug, wo fischlin sitzet dir der pflug . . ." (Bu.139) The "pflug" of which she speaks is undoubtedly a reference to the phallus.

Her second meeting with the flounder does fulfil her "feminine" masochistic desires, for she experiences both pain and sexual gratification at the hands of the substitute love-object. For the flounder:

> . . . peitschte sie mit den Flossen, dem Schwanz über den Strand in die See, immer tiefer hinein, und nahm sie mit sich, wie versprochen. (Bu.141)

Implications of the masochistic castration/rape phantasy at the hands of the father-figure, as elucidated by Freud, are here brought to light. For the imagery is suggestive of a forceful seduction.

Her reemergence and subsequent facial distortions, leads one to believe that this is a visible manifestation of guilt feelings. This sense of guilt in no way, however, results in an abatement of her masochistic activities. Indeed, this is apparently common in such a neurosis, according to Freud, who states that:

> A sense of guilt, too, finds expression in the manifest content of masochistic phantasies; the subject assumes he has committed some crime (the nature of which is left indefinate) which is to be expiated by all these painful and tormenting procedures.[110]

So strong are her masochistic tendencies that Dorothea undertakes the labour of a pilgrimage to Rome and is subsequently immured upon her return. Her masochistic sufferings are symbolically depicted in the etchings of Richard Strya; etchings which could serve to illustrate the various aforementioned aspects of "feminine masochism":

> Erscheinungen im Zwielicht. Die Hochzeit unter der Pestglocke. Und zwischen allem Gassengedränge und frührevolutionären Auflauf immer wieder meine Dorothea, in Lumpen, von Schlangen umzüngelt, fiebertoll, nackt ein Schwert reitend, dem Vogel Greif ins Gefieder geätzt, durch Gitter geflochten, offen, gläsern, an sirrenden Fädern hängend, wie sie den Butt Küßt, endlich vermauert, vom Fleisch gefallen, schon heilig, in Anbetung, schrecklich. (Bu.126)

The symbolic imagery is quite striking in this particular passage, for, virtually all the "feminine" masochistic tendencies mentioned, are represented here in varying degrees, thus pulling all the threads together. In this etching the aspect of self-destructiveness is intermingled with sexuality in the form of phallic symbolism. The snake and sword imagery, whilst definitely being considered as phallic objects, also fulfil the requirements of "feminine" masochism, because they are both threatening and aggressive symbols. These images, and Dorothea's symbolic submission to their power, fulfil the Freudian assertion that it is at the hands of the loveobject/father-figure that pain shall be endured. For it is ultimately for Jesus and his substitute, the flounder, that Dorothea undergoes such ordeals. Thus the first two elements of the equation penis - father - child are fulfilled.

The final part of the equation, though, namely "child," is not fulfilled by Dorothea. In ideal cases, according to Freud, a girl would assuage her penis-envy by supplanting this by:

> The wish for a man as the possessor of a penis. Even before this, the wish for a penis has changed into the wish for a baby, or the latter wish has taken the place of the former.[111]

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[110] "The Economic Problem of Masochism," (1924), *S.E.* Vol XIX, p.162.
[111] "On the Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Eroticism," (1917), *S.E.* Vol XVII, p.128.

Thus the reproductive instincts are created by "feminine" masochism, namely that the girl should accept her natural role as a passive receptacle for the penis and the pain of childbirth. In extreme cases of "feminine" masochism, however, such as is displayed by Dorothea, the sexual instinct regarding the desire to possess a penis, comes into conflict with the reproductive function. Helene Deutsch comments as follows on this particular situation:

> A woman may commandeer the whole of her masochistic instinctual energy for the purpose of direct gratification and abandon sublimation in the function of reproduction.[112]

This element is amply depicted in the figure of Dorothea, who is so dependent on the gratification of her "feminine" masochistic impulses, that she is totally ignorant of her daughter's death:

> Dem Kind gelang nur ein spitzer Schrei, der nicht tief genug wirkte, um die ganz an ihren Jesus verlorene Mutter von den Buβerbsen zu reiβen. (Bu.129)

Her masochistic tendencies have taken over so much of her personality that they have destroyed any glimmer of maternal concern. She is content for her husband to assume total care and control over the children, which is, traditionally speaking, a woman's role. Meanwhile she devotes her whole mind and body to Jesus; the driving force behind which is her subconscious wish for the sexual gratification of her "feminine" masochistic impulses.

For Dorothea, sexual gratification is dependent upon the satisfaction of her masochistic tendencies. Thus, her husband, the narrator-projection Albrecht Schlichting, could never hope to fulfil her sexually. This aspect of "feminine masochism" is elaborated by Helene Deutsch who explains the link between this self-destructive tendency and frigidity. She suggests that the attempted repression of such masochistic impulses usually leads to the fact that the rational object-choice (i,e. the actual marriage partner) is the polar opposite of these masochistic requirements. The partner usually satisfies the demands of the ego which, in this case acts as a repressive agent to such self-destructive impulses. Thus, he is normally affectionate and undemanding by nature; a disposition which in no way, however, satisfies the woman sexually.

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[112] Helene Deutsch, "The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women," in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis,* Vol XI, 1930, p.59.

And because the masochistic requirements are not supplied by the partner, the conditions for sexual gratification remain unsated. Frigidity, Helene Deutsch concludes, is usually the result of such a situation. This aspect is also included in the depiction of Dorothea, whose unyielding flesh is a source of anguish for the narrator-projection. He comments on her frigidity as follows:

> Erst als die Sechzehnjährige mir angeheiratet und doch nicht meine Frau wurde, ertastete ich, nun zeitweilig im Besitz ihres gleichgültig bleibenden Fleisches, den zernarbten Rücken, die immer offenen, schwärenden Wunden. (Bu.121)

Dorothea similarly asserts her disatisfaction with her husband; the underlying implication being that only the father-figure, Jesus, could gratify her masochistic tendencies:

> Sie sei Dorothea von Monthau, die keinem Mann, auch ihrem Albrecht, dem Schwertfeger nicht, gehöre, nur dem Herrn Jesus hänge sie an. (Bu.138)
>
> Es sei ihr Wunsch gewesen, frei zu sein: nur noch für den Herrn Jesus verfügbar. (Bu.157)

Because of Dorothea's rejection of normal sexual relations, due to her sexual obsession with Jesus, the narrator-projection, at one point, laments that he did not heed the warnings of the flounder, not to marry Dorothea (cf.Bu.152). This brings to mind a warning Freud proffers to men, concerning marriage to a girl who displays neurotic symptoms:

> We urgently advise our male patients not to marry any girl who has had nervous trouble before marriage. . . . In the conflict between her desires and her sense of duty, she once more seeks refuge in a neurosis.[113]

Dorothea's life, as portrayed by Grass, seems to centre on the anti-feminist tendency of portraying women as neurotic creatures; the seat of their neurosis lying in the Freudian concept of "penis-envy." Her life does not seem to be an expression solely of a woman's revolt against marriage, as the narrator-projection affirms (Cf.Bu.170), but rather the patronizing portrayal of a female neurotic.

Further to this complex, there are anti-feminist tendencies to be discerned in the close examination of the image of "die dritte Brust," the use of which will be shown to betray a male chauvinistic desire, on the part of the "poet," to submit to traditional male "ideology." The use

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[113] "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Illness," (1908), *S.E.* Vol IX, p.195.

of this image will be shown to reaffirm the attitude whereby women are called upon to fulfil the "traditional" role of "das Urweibliche," namely as wife and mother. Any deviation from this "norm," such as political activism, is presumed a threat, not only to the patriarchal order, but, more importantly, to the personal relationship existing between husband and wife.

4. "Die dritte Brust" as an Expression of Male "Ideology"

The narrator's repeated references to the goddess Aua, and his unwillingness to accept the loss of the mythological third breast, reflect an analogy to a child's fears of being weaned off his mother's breast. Freud comments that "the child's anxiety for its earliest nourishment is altogether insatiable, that it never gets over the pain of losing its mother's breast."[114] This anxiety is mirrored in the psychological make-up of the narrator, but these references to Aua reveal anti-feminist tendencies through his subconscious adherance to the traditional male "Wunschtraum."

The figure of Aua and her third breast is indicative of a mythological symbol of fecundity, the implication being that she is representative of the "Urmutter." Erich Neumann, in his book entitled *The Great Mother*, offers illustrations of many-breasted goddesses[115], and if these are not the source of inspiration for the three-breasted goddess in *Der Butt*, it is also conceivable that Grass has used the well-known mythological figures of Kali and Priapos as a basis for his mythological depiction of Aua. Both Kali and Priapos have exaggerated features; Kali, an Indian deity, has many arms, whilst Priapos, a Greek god, possesses two penes and is, as such, an exaggerated symbol of fecundity.

Friedrich von der Leyen in his book entitled *Die Götter der Germanen*[116] describes a fertility statue which was believed to derive from the Stone Age. Its attributes he describes as follows:

> Der Sitz der Fruchtbarkeit, Leib, Gefäß, Brüste sind überstark entwickelt. In demütiger Haltung, betend, die schmalen Arme und Hände auf die breiten Brüste gelegt, das Haupt nach vorne geneigt, steht dies kleine und doch überdicke nackte Wesen vor uns, aus Kaltstein gebildet, mit Rötel bemalt: rot ist die Farbe des Lebens.[117]

The emphasis rests on the exageration of the sexual attributes, and is similar in many ways to

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[114] "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis-XXXIII Femininity," (1933), *S.E.* Vol XXII, p.122.
[115] See Neumann's illustration of the XIX century Hindu Bhavani-Trimurti-Mother (p.235), also plate no. 35 of Diana of Ephesus (Rome, II century A.D.).
[116] Friedrich von der Leyen, *Der Götter der Germanen* (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913).
[117] *ibid.* p.22.

the figure of Aua in that both epitomize the aspects of maternal care.

The adoption of this mythological "Urmutter" figure could perhaps be understood as a reaffirmation of male ideology whereby women are traditionally considered in a purely maternal role and are therefore judged as totally unsuited to the male-orientated political sphere. The "traditional" role of women as wives and mothers is succinctly expressed in the depiction of the cult of the "Matronae," a Germanic cult which worshipped various earth-mother idols. The function of these female deities is explained by Paul Hermann in his book entitled *Deutsche Mythologie*,[118] which was published in 1898. His description concentrates on their maternal role of securing harmony within the family and of being supportive towards their husband:

> Sie verliehen Segen und häuslichen Wohlstand, knüpfen Familienbände an, schenken Fülle und Fruchtbarkeit des Landes, stärken den Mann im Felde und Kriege und hüten das Haus.[119]

It becomes clear that not only does a woman, as a mother, possess such supportive qualities, but also as a wife. For, according to Freud:

> A man . . . looks for someone who can represent his picture of his mother , as it has dominated his mind from his earliest childhood.[120]

Thus the narrator's continual reflection upon the maternal qualities, inherant in Aua and the third breast, imply a desire to return to a state in which a woman's role centred around the provision of succour and emotional support to both child and husband. His lamentation at the loss of the breast and his seemingly sarcastic statement that men over forty should, once more, be suckled, stresses the narrator's subconscious desire to deny the contemporary potency of women within the political sphere. For, with the resurgence of the feminist movement, women gradually moved out of their "traditional" role and renounced, in part, the male ideological notion of "das Urweibliche" in favour of active participation in the political sphere. It is Ilsebill's mockery of the narrator's dreams of this symbolic third breast that highlights his

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[118] Paul Hermann, *Deutsche Mythologie* (Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Engelmann, 1898).
[119] *ibid.* p.105.
[120] "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," (1905), *S.E.* Vol VII, p.228.

preoccupation and desire for a wife who fulfils this traditional "urweibliche Rolle," in which a wife acts basically as a "nursemaid" to both husband and child.

The narrator eventually admits that "wenn ich ins Leere greife, meine ich immer die dritte Brust. Geht mir bestimmt nicht alleine so" (Bu.10). He thus confesses that all men crave a woman who acts as both wife and mother to them, and who is attentive to their every whim; offering emotional support and busying herself with the family, rather than concerning herself with wider, more political issues.

It is within the succession of poems entitled "Aua" (Bu.22), "Gestillt" (Bu.70), and "Wie ich mich sehe" (Bu.95) that the narrator links the roles of mother and wife; the former being the supplier of actual sustenance, whilst the latter the provider of emotional succour. Both these two ideas of physical and emotional support are implied in the metaphor of breast-feeding. The loss of the breast is, therefore, not only a reference to actual weaning off the mother's breast, but implies, more importantly, that the narrator must wean himself from traditional male attitudes. This notion instills expectations that a wife's role should revolve totally around the needs of her husband, just as in a mother/child relationship. The narrator-projection's fear of losing the breast is thus suggestive of the anxiety of losing the "maternal" support traditionally to be found in the figure of a wife.

In the poem entitled "Aua," the first stanza lays stress on the elements of physical satisfaction attained from suckling at the third breast. There are neither elements of conflict nor disatisfaction as the supply of succour and comfort, both in the physical and the emotional sense, promises to be endless.

All the aspects of maternal love and support, as embodied in the symbol of the third breast and the implication of breast-feeding, satisfy the narrator's emotional needs. He is content within such a relationship, just as is a baby at the breast.

The very rhythm of this first stanza evokes the image of an infant suckling at the breast. For the movement within the first stanza is suggestive of a continuous flow of life-giving nutrient, because of the lack of any disruptive punctuation; the resounding quality

of the subjunctive mood; and the continual repetition of the conjunction "und."

Und säße gegenüber drei Brüsten
und wüßte nicht nur das eine, das andere Gesäuge
und wäre nicht doppelt, weil üblich gespalten
und hätte nicht zwischen die Wahl
und müßte nie wieder entweder oder
und trüge dem Zwilling nicht nach
und bliebe ohne den übrigen Wunsch...

Aber ich habe nur andere Wahl
Und hänge am anderen Gesäuge.
Dem Zwilling neide ich.
Mein übriger Wunsch ist üblich gespalten.
Und auch ganz bin ich halb nur halb.
Immer dazwischen fällt meine Wahl. (Bu.22)

The discordant intrusion of the second stanza, however, succeeds in totally shattering the dreamlike quality of the first. No longer does the poem flow like a lullaby, for the inclusion of a greater quantity of punctuation, added to the forceful change of tense, disallows any element of continuity. A sense of disatisfaction is built into the very structure of this second stanza, as the poet is metaphorically weaned from his image of "das Urweibliche," as is influenced so heavily by male ideology. He is forced out of his phantasy of the "perfect" woman, as conditioned by the male "Wunschtraum," and is made to face harsh reality. Through the use of the metaphor of breast-feeding, and subsequently of weaning, the narrator intertwines both the traditional and contempory images of woman, in stanzas one and two respectively. The first implies the traditional supportive role of woman as wife and mother, whilst the second marks the woman's break from her "traditional" role. The resultant discontentment of the narrator is revealed, as he revels in dreams which are conditioned by traditional masculine modes of thought.

Further to this, in the poem "Gestillt," the loss of the third breast could be understood as a metaphor for the ultimate termination of women's "traditional" roles. The narrator laments the fact that men can no longer rely on the fulfilment of their needs by contemporary

women. For women are no longer prepared to cater exclusively to the emotional demands of men, but instead seek equality, thus leaving men in an emotional void.

The inclusion of the image of the cow[121] of which Jacob Grimm stated: "die kuh als mutter der welt gilt,"[122] can conceivably be equated with the primary role of a woman. For cows are a common symbol for the milk-giving mother, whilst the woman in her traditional marital role is thought of as an unending source of comfort and solace to the husband. It is in the poem "Gestillt" that the image of the cow is first introduced and linked to "die dritte Brust":

> Männer nähren nicht
> Männer schielen heimwärts, wenn Kühe
> mit schwerem Euter die Straße
> und den Berufsverkehr sperren.
> Männer träumen die dritte Brust.
> Männer neiden dem Säugling
> und immer fehlt ihnen.
>
> . . .
> Ab vierzig sollten alle Männer wieder gesäugt werden:
> öffentlich und gegen Gebühr
> bis sie ohne Wunsch satt sind und nicht mehr weinen,
> auf dem Klo weinen müssen: allein. (Bu.71)

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[121] Neumann comments as follows on the link between the symbols of the breast and the cow: "The breast motif involves the symbolism of milk and the cow. The Goddess as cow, ruling over the food-giving herd, is one of the earliest historical objects of worship, occurring among the Mesopotamian population after the al 'Ubaid period."
The Great Mother. p.124.

[122] Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (3 Vols), (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965), Vol III, p.84.
In Vol. II of this edition, Grimm speculates as to the mythological and linguistic origins of the notion of the cow as "mutter der erde": "die edda gedenkt einer *kuh* namens *Auđ humla*, welche bei dem ersten menschengeschlecht eine grosse rolle spielt. . . . Das sanskr. *gaus* (bos und vacca), thema gô, acc. gâm, pers. ghau, gho, entspricht dem lett. *gohw*, ahd. *chuo*, ags. *cû*, altn. *kŷr*, noch wichtiger ist daß go zugleich terra und plaga bedeutet, wodurch es sich an das gr. γα̃, γη̃ schließt. hierzu das auftreten jener *Auđ humla* in der nord. schöpfungsgeschichte genommen, läßt sich vielleicht *rinta* (die erde) und *Rindr* zu *rind* armentum halten, welches freilich in der alten form HR fordert und nl. rund, ags. hryđer, hrođer lautet; wer weiß ob nicht auch rinde (cortex) ursprünglich aspiriert war?
ibid. Vol II, p.554.

Again in the poem "Wie ich mich sehe," the poet refers to the image of the cow. But here the figure of the "Köchin" is also included. And it is the figure of the cook in the novel who always fulfils the role of wife or lover to the successive narrator-projections. It is to her, in her traditional role, that the narrator now turns in his search for comfort and succour:

> Unterm Euter der schwarzweißen Kuh:
> ich sehe mich trinken
> oder dir angelegt, Köchin
> nachdem deine Brust
> tropfend über dem garenden Fisch hing;
> du findest mich schön.

Thus the poems "Aua," "Gestillt" and "Wie ich mich sehe" trace the progression of thought from Aua (the Symbolic Mother), through "die dritte Brust," "Kühe mit schwerem Euter," ultimately arriving at the figure of "die Köchin" (the Symbolic Wife/Lover). The figures of Aua and of the cook are thus connected through the mutual qualities that are traditionally thought to be inherant in both. The abrupt loss of the third breast in "Aua," though, and the narrator's subsequent wistfulness in the poems "Gestillt" and "Wie ich mich sehe" stress the gulf existing between dreams and reality. His nostalgia reflects a longing to restore women to the role conceived for them by the male "Wunschtraum."

It is with the expansion of women's roles away from being merely housewives and mothers that the narrator fears the loss of the "traditionally" supportive elements offered by the figure of the wife. The poems "Arbeit geteilt" (Bu.37), and "Manzi Manzi" (Bu.143) testify to the gradual estrangement of Ilsebill from the narrator. This estrangement is instigated by Ilsebill's increasing feminist awareness, which is indicative of a desire to break free from the role to which she has been assigned by the requirements of the patriarchal system. It is the narrator's fear of modern woman which lies at the basis of his escape into male ideology. His dreams of being suckled first by Aua and then by "die Köchin" highlight his escape into such ideology; a reaffirmation, thus, of the chauvinist contention that "a woman's place is in the home": "Sorg du für Frieden zuhaus - ich will mich auswärts beeilen" ("Arbeit geteilt,"

Bu.37).

It is not so much women's political awareness, though, that the narrator fears, rather the effects the feminist movement will actually entail for the personal relationships between men and women. His anxiety is located in the symbol of the breast, for in the "traditional" figure of a wife, the man finds embodied the maternal aspects of warmth, support and comfort on which he can rely. If the woman should deviate from this role, then he, the man, is left wanting.

In the episode entitled "Wir aßen zu dritt" (Bu.387-402), the narrator, under the influence of the "Fliegenpilz," escapes from the anxiety that women can no longer be held back by the patriarchal order. In his moment of deranged fear the narrator turns to the figure of Aua, the Symbolic Mother:

> Allgegenwärtig war Aua, das dreibrüstige Prinzip; wie auch Frau Dr. Schönherr in Fürsorge überall war. Sie sorgte dafür, daß mir nichts Schlimmes angetan wurde. Sie ließ keinen Streit zwischen den Weibern aufkommen, auch wenn es, wo die Huntscha neben Dorothea saß, noch immer bedenklich knisterte. (Bu.401)

He thus escapes from the attacks of modern woman into the safe haven of male ideology. He is now buffetted by the vision of Aua whose maternal protection promises to guard him against harm. No longer can he rely on Ilsebill to be totally supportive and be there, for him alone. Not only does she aspire, like other feminists, to political and social equality, but she is now also more demanding in the personal sphere of the one-to-one relationship between husband and wife. Thus the narrator comments in the poem "Alle": " . . . neben mir / träumt sich Ilsebill weg." (Bu.421)

The "urmütterlichen" and "urweiblichen" elements embodied in the mythological figure of Aua and the symbol of the third breast give rise to the metaphor of breast-feeding as the emotional comfort and support a man gains from both mother and wife. Hence the withdrawal of the breast is indicative of a break from this male/female relationship as designated by the patriarchal system. The subsequent lament can be analguous to the child's deep-seated grief at losing the breast. Freud states that:

> It is as though our children had remained forever unsated, as though they had never suckled long enough at their mother's breast.[123]

Similarly, Griselde Dubertin comments to Ilsebill on the narrator's adherance to male ideology:

> Jedenfalls läßt sich fast alles bei ihm auf seine extreme Mutterbindung zurückführen. Guckt ihn euch an: der Junge ist, obgleich schon schrumpfköpfig, ein Brustkind auf ewig geblieben. (Bu.396)

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[123] "Female Sexuality," (1931), *S.E.* Vol XXI, p.234.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of particular episodes in *Der Butt* leads one to conclude that there are some definite anti-feminist tendencies to be found within the novel. These can only be revealed upon a close inspection of the psychological meaning existing behind various scenes/characters. And it is only in comparison with the model of Freudian theories of psychoanalysis, namely his various case studies and theories concerning infantile sexuality, that one can interpret and pinpoint this deeper level of meaning. It is an examination of this substratum which leads to an explanation, however tentative, of the reasons behind the behavioural patterns of certain characters within the novel. Whereas if one were to look merely at the content, which exists on a superficial plane, one might arrive at a completely different conclusion.

In the case of Dorothea von Monthau, for instance, from an examination of the content of her life-story one might conclude, as does the feminist tribunal, that her behaviour was merely expressive of a revolt against the confines of marriage; an institution established by a patriarchal order. But by employing Freudian psychological concepts as a tool, it becomes possible to unearth the underlying significance of her actions. It is thus revealed that her behaviour is determined by a subconscious desire to gratify the sexually-oriented impulses of her "feminine" masochistic tendencies. These, themselves, stem from a deep-seated wish to possess the power of the phallus. And it is this fundamental desire which supposedly lies at the root of most feminine neuroses, and which manifests itself in the form of sexual aberrations, according to Freud's theories on female psychology.

Once a link has been established between the import of both the Freudian theories and Grass' literary work, it is then possible to ascertain that the "content-purport" of the two discourses is indeed similar. A further interpretation of this purport highlights the anti-feminist tendencies existing in both texts. For both rest heavily on the concept of the primacy of the phallus as the basis for the foundation and perpetuation of a cultured civilisation. Freud contends that women are, by nature, driven by instinctual demands more so than men, who through the process of attaining the super-ego must necessarily sublimate their instinctual

motivations for the good of the social body. He states that:

> The work of civilisation has become increasingly the business of men; it confronts them with evermore difficult tasks and compels them to carry out instinctual sublimations of which women are little capable.[124]

This concept is reaffirmed in the initial chapter of *Der Butt*, in which the onus rests on men to overcome the primitiveness of the matriarchal horde, and establish a cultured civilisation; this is by definition, both in Grass' and Freud's terms, a patriarchy. This anti-feminist notion that women are basically lacking in the qualities necessary to conduct a cultured society rests on the fact that, according to Freud, women are less determined by social and moral constraints. Their super-ego never forms to the same standard as men, for they are too dominated by emotional reactions to ever attain the level of objectivity required for a commanding position within society.

In his essay entitled "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes,"[125] Freud comments that:

> I cannot evade the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men. Their super-ego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men. Character traits which critics of every epoch have brought up against women - that they show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great exigencies in life, that they are more often influenced in their judgements by feelings of affection or hostility - all of these would be amply accounted for by the modification in the formation of their super-ego which we have infered above. We must not allow ourselves to be deflected from such conclusions by the denials of the feminists, who are anxious to force us to regard those two sexes as completely equal in position and worth.[126]

Thus Freud contends that women are, by condition of their sex, inferior to men. His denial of the feminist call for equality between the sexes leads one to understand that he cannot conceive of women as anything but the "second sex." His phraseology reveals his disdain, for although one can indeed justly claim that men and women are not equal in position in a patriarchal society, to declare also that there is an inherant inequality in worth between the two, is highly contentious. The main issue seems to revolve around the implication that, due to

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[124] *Civilisation and its Discontents*, (1930), *S.E.* Vol XXI, p.103.
[125] *S.E.* Vol XIX.
[126] *ibid.* p.257.

the "weaker" super-ego, women are basically driven by instinctual impulses and are, therefore, less effective within the political sphere.

The ability to organise, judge and effect political measures is held to be lacking in women who, Freud contends, could not effectively fulfil the demands of political expediency, because they are too emotionally charged. This view is, to a great extent, depicted by Grass in the proceedings of the feminist tribunal. With a heavy overlay of sarcasm and irony "das Feminal" (Bu.524) is described by the narrator. The emphasis rests on their apparent inability to organise themselves effectively and to come to any agreement within this feminist movement itself. The factional squabbles within the party are a high point of satire. The very titles of some of the groups highlights these extremely satirical elements: "lesbische Aktion," "Brot & Rosen," "Frauenkollektiv Ilsebill" and "Roter Pisspott" (Bu.51). These factions can barely be brought to agreement over the issue of the flounder, and even at the end of the trial there is no sense of unity within the tribunal. It is thus with irony that the flounder names the feminist tribunal "das Feminal," which is ironically suggestive of a sense of unity, when in fact none exists. The description of the final judgement of the flounder stresses further the inefficacy of women in the political sphere:

> Als Ganzes wollte man beides, gespalten dies oder das. Während die Buttpartei gegen die Liquidierung des Angeklagten Einspruch erhob, prinzipiell gegen die Todestrafe war, allenfalls eine symbolische Züchtigung erwog, danach aber den Butt als sühnenden Berater verpflichten und deshalb wieder seinem Element übergeben wollte, war die radikale Minderheit entschlossen, auf seinen Rat zu verzichten und den Butt auszulöschen. (Bu.532/3)

In discussing the depiction of the feminists, it can be seen that their political potency is indeed lacking. Even the symbolic "Buttessen" (Bu.534-536), as explained in chapter two of this thesis, has the ironic implication of being a reaffirmation of the male-oriented system, by the very movement that seeks to overthrow masculine domination. In this respect it could be tempting to classify *Der Butt* as an anti-feminist novel, due to Grass' controversial treatment of the feminist movement. In viewing the novel in its entirety, however, it soon becomes clear that the term "anti-feminist" is problematic. For it implies a conscious decision to denounce women's role within society. And, as this thesis illustrates, it is only in delving into the

underlying meaning of the novel that such tendencies become truly manifest. It must be remembered that these are merely "tendencies" and not blatant anti-feminist statements. Superficially, one could argue with ease that there are many pro-feminist statements; such as the numerous and blatant denunciations of the male-oriented system both by the flounder and the narrator (the question is even permitted as to what extent the patriarchal system in *Der Butt* is depicted as actual progress); the positive portrayal of Amanda Woyke, of whom even the flounder says: "Sie hat, nur eine Frau, dennoch Geschichte gemacht. Erstaunlich, nicht wahr?" (Bu.19). The very conclusion of the novel also points towards the future lying in the hands of women, as they have now gained the flounder as advisor.

Despite these "definite" feminist statements, one cannot deny the seemingly feminist/anti-feminist ambiguity of many passages within the novel. And though one may reason that, superficially, they appear pro-feminist, there is an underlying tension that may be hard to define. It is this tension which I have attempted to bring to light by means of Freudian theories of psychoanalysis, which are, in themselves, highly contentious arguments. What has been revealed from this appraisal is a level of meaning which is conditioned by masculine modes of thought; whereby men cannot readily accept women as their equals. This level of reasoning is not necessarily a conscious decision to denounce women as inferior, far from it. For Grass would not consciously incorporate serious anti-feminist argumentation in his novel. Indeed, his interviews suggest that he is of quite the opposite opinion, namely that women should be brought more to the fore in the political sphere, and that their influence might then have beneficial effects in a society dominated by masculine aggressiveness.

The anti-feminist tendencies which this thesis has unearthed must, therefore, be understood to exist beneath the level of conscious expression. Therefore the very term "anti-feminist" must be seen to be inappropriate in this context. For to classify the novel as wholly anti-feminist would be tantamount to condemning all male literature, since the instigation of patriarchal society, as such. The term "non-feminist" might thus be more appropriate to our argument; the implication being that the "anti-feminist" tendencies are not

consciously incorporated, but are rather a subconscious feature of the influence of the patriarchal system. They are, therefore, a cultural acquisition which exists in successive generations of this male-dominated society. This opinion can be reiterated by Freud's idea of a "collective mind" which assures the continuation of certain social and moral attitudes through the subconscious acquisition by the individual of his cultural heritage. Freud states that:

> Without the assumption of a collective mind which makes it possible to neglect the interruptions of mental acts caused by the extinction of the individual, social psychology in general cannot exist unless psychical processes were continued from one generation to another, if each generation were obliged to acquire its attitude to life anew, there would be no progress in this field and next to no development.[127]

Whilst some "progress" and "development" has definitely been achieved, within this patriarchal society, to move consciously towards a state of equality between men and women, there nevertheless exists a subconscious level of reasoning which clings to the notion of women as inferior beings. Therefore, despite the conscious decision to abolish sexual discrimination, there remains, still, a subconscious level of "non-feminist" thinking which acts as an underlying barrier against the acceptance of women, by men, as complete equals; both socially and politically. Thus, superficially *Der Butt* cannot be classified as anti-feminist literature, but there is reason to argue that Grass has not yet shaken off the traditional masculine mode of reasoning, as discerned in the "non-feminist" sub-structure of his novel.

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[127] *Totem and Taboo*, (1912-1913), *S.E.* , Vol XIII, pp.57/8.

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